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


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Rev. JOHN GILL, D. D.
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tism. By R. PENGILLY, author of "The Scripture
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covers, for general circulation.

INFANT BAPTISM

A

PART AND PILLAR OF POPERY

BY JOHN GILL, D. D.



REVISED AND EDITED

BY GEORGE B. IDE, D. D.

WITH AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER BY THE EDITOR

Philadelphia.

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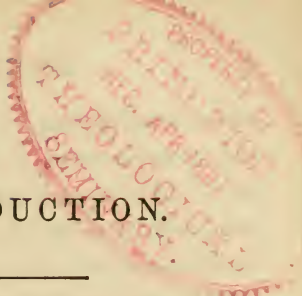
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INTRODUCTION.

EVERY thoughtful observer must be aware, that the present aspects of Romanism are as peculiar as they are portentous. While, as a political power, it is rapidly declining ; while its presence is endured with reluctance even in Italy itself: the ascendancy of its dogmas and ceremonies, and their hold on the minds of men, seem to be strangely increasing. Withered and decrepid as a State, as an Ecclesiastical System it appears imbued with a singular and fearful vitality. Especially is this the case in Protestant lands. The dark shadow of its superstitions is seen returning over nations, from which it was once thought to have been banished forever. In England, in Scotland, on the Continent of Europe, in our own free and enlightened America, Popery is extending its influence, and multiplying its triumphs. Its cardinals and bishops tread again the soil from which the Refor-

mation expelled them. Its schools, and churches, and convents, rise in every city and village. Its gaudy processions and impious mummeries are enacted, without rebuke, in the face of heaven. It boasts its converts gathered from every class and condition, and exultingly points to the long array of "the reconciled." And while it is thus enlarging its numbers by direct accessions, it is viewed with growing favor by multitudes not of its pale. Infidels patronize it. Politicians fawn upon it. The gay and the voluptuous give it their suffrage. Mystics, enthusiasts, formalists, worldlings, all unite to countenance its pretensions, or, at least, to affirm its harmlessness. Even the professed churches of Christ oppose to it but a feeble barrier. The more corrupt fraternize with its spirit, ape its forms, and appropriate all of it but its name; while the great mass of the more pure, however disposed to resist its encroachments, seem well nigh powerless to do so.

How is this phenomenon to be explained? In what manner may we account for the startling fact, that amid the blaze of science, the spread of education, the wide diffusion of intelligence, the awakened

spirit of inquiry and of progress—in lands blessed with an open Bible, a free Gospel, and all the appliances of religious instruction—an old, tottering Hierarchy, foul with pollution, laden with abhorred memories, and reeking with the blood of murdered saints, should come forth from the gloom of the dark Past, and flaunting its tattered traditions in the eyes of the nineteenth century, be welcomed and embraced? Must there not be some latent defect—some insidious weakness in the very heart of Protestantism itself, to render possible such a result? We firmly believe that there is. And we are equally confident that we know what it is. The churches, which abjured Popery at the Reformation, have retained, in the practice of infant baptism, the most vital element of Popery; the prolific germ out of which it grew; the secret principle which has engendered all its baleful fruits, and which is ever tending to reproduce them. The essence of Popery lies in the assumption, that sacraments possess an intrinsic power to confer grace; and that, consequently, those who administer them are constituted channels of intercourse and mediation between God and the souls of men.

All the absurdities and abominations with which Romanism is characterized, are but developments of this central dogma; offshoots from this one poisonous root. But this also is the very core and substance of infant baptism. If its upholders do not regard it as the merest nullity—a rite as vapid and meaningless as it is unscriptural—they must ascribe to it some mysterious efficacy; some hidden and magical power; by which it influences the spiritual state of its recipients, and brings them under moral relations different from those of others. Accordingly, we find that wherever it is left to unfold itself freely—wherever it is not shorn of its natural proportions and accompaniments by contact with the advocates of primitive truth and order,—it always appears in connection with baptismal regeneration, infant church-membership, and sacramental holiness. And this is Popery.

Here, then, is the rottenness of Protestantism. Here is the weak point in her defences, which lays her open to the inroad of the foe. Here is the wily agent of the Papacy within her very intrenchments, paralyzing her strength, turning her weapons against herself, seducing her soldiers, and leading

them off to swell the hostile ranks. Never can she prosper in the struggle, till this dangerous inmate be unmasked and thrust out. As well may the stream be dried up, while the spring-head flows; as well may pestilence cease, while malaria continues to breathe its infection—as Popery die, while infant baptism lives.

In this state of the moral conflict which is going on in our own and in other lands, it has appeared to the Committee of the American Baptist Publication Society, that a reprint of the celebrated tract of Dr. Gill, entitled, “*Infant Baptism a part and pillar of Popery,*” might be eminently seasonable and useful. Its author lived in an age resembling, in some of its aspects, that in which our lot is cast. A national Church, joined in unholy wedlock with the State, and Dissent, forswearing her troth to Christ by marrying herself with Tradition, had begun to bring forth their natural progeny; and Popery grew apace. The English government became alarmed. The partisans of the Establishment trembled. All sects and orders were filled with dismay, and united in the general demand, that more stringent penalties should be enacted

against the ingress of Popish emissaries, and the propagation of Popish tenets. At this juncture, Dr. Gill, surveying the crisis with his clear eye, and fathoming its causes with his keen and deep-searching logic, lifted up his warning voice, and showed conclusively, that the source of the evil did not lie in any freedom granted to Romanists, but in infant baptism itself, which, nestled in the bosom of Protestantism, had diffused a Papal leaven through its entire body.

It seemed to the Committee, that a production so influential in its own time, and so suited to the present, deserved something better, than to be swept away on the stream of the past, or to be searched out with difficulty in the scarce and dear volumes of the author's miscellaneous works. They, therefore, resolved to revise and publish it; and appointed the writer of this notice to carry out their decision.

On examination, however, it was found that while the reasoning of the treatise was cogent, and its thoughts massive and powerful, its style was such as greatly to unfit it for general circulation. Dr. Gill, with all his immense learning, was remark-

able for his involved and slovenly mode of writing, even in an age when less heed was given than now to the graces of composition. The editor was, therefore, instructed by the Committee to make such changes in the literary execution of the work as might, in his judgment, adapt it to modern taste, and prepare it for more extensive usefulness. This, the reader is frankly apprised, has been done. While every thought and argument of the author has been scrupulously retained, and in the connection in which he placed them, the language is almost wholly new. The book has, in fact, been entirely rewritten; and, in some cases, a fuller development has been given of topics deemed too briefly stated. The editor has also verified the authorities cited; added new ones; and inserted references to later editions where they exist. In a word, he has taken down "the sword of Goliath" from "behind the ephod,"* where it hung neglected—has stripped off its mouldy covering, wiped away its rust, polished its surface, and done his best to furbish it for the battle. It is true, he might with less time and labor have made a new sword. But

* 1 Sam. xxi. 9.

then it could not be said of that, as it can be of this, "There is none like it." May it prove mighty for the Lord of Hosts, and for the overthrow of tradition and error.

G. B. I.

INFANT BAPTISM,

A

PART AND PILLAR OF POPERY.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

HAVING been called upon to maintain certain statements which, in a recent publication,¹ I advanced with respect to infant baptism, or else to retract them, I readily undertake the former; and shall, therefore, in the ensuing treatise, endeavor to explain myself, and to defend the positions then taken. With this view, it will be proper first to recite the paragraph which has been so strenuously assailed. It is as follows: “The Pedobaptists

¹ A Reply to Rev. Peter Clark's Defence of Infant Baptism.

are ever restless and uneasy, struggling to sustain, if possible, their unscriptural practice of infant baptism; although it is no other than a pillar of Popery; a corruption, by which Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over many nations; which forms the basis of national churches and ecclesiastical establishments; and which, uniting the church and the world, binds them together so firmly, that there can never be a full separation of the one from the other, nor any thorough reform in religion, until it be wholly removed. But, although it has so long and so largely obtained, and still does obtain, yet I believe, with a firm and unshaken faith, that the time is hastening on, when it will no more be practised in the world; when churches will be formed on the model ordained by Christ, and observed by the Apostles; when the doctrines and discipline of the Gospel will be restored to their primitive purity and lustre; and when the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper will be administered as they were first delivered, clear from all the superstitious admixtures with which later times have defaced them. All this, I am persuaded, will be accomplished,

when the Lord shall be King over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord, and His name one.”

The paragraph, thus cited, consists of several distinct propositions, which I shall endeavor, in the following chapters, to elucidate and establish. And if, in the course of the investigation, any thing should be said that may seem to savor of severity, let it be remembered that all my remarks are directed against infant baptism itself, and not against the individuals who practice it. For the evangelical denominations adhering to this custom, I cherish the highest regard. I recognize them as members of the body of Christ, and fellow heirs with the saints. I rejoice in their general advocacy of the doctrines of the Gospel; in their Christian spirit; in their unwearied labors to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer. But while I love and venerate them for their many excellencies, I do not the less deplore the one error by which those excellencies are sullied. And I deplore it, not because it is fatal to their piety, and will ultimately bar them out of heaven; but because, however honestly held, it nevertheless dis-

honors the authority of the Saviour whom they profess to obey, hinders the supremacy of His laws, and counteracts their own efforts to promote it. May "the Spirit of truth" so enlighten our minds, that we shall all know and receive "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

CHAPTER II.

RELATION OF INFANT BAPTISM TO POPERY.

MY first position is, that infant baptism is a part and pillar of Popery; and that by means of it Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over many nations.

The phrase, infant baptism, is employed here and throughout this discussion, in accordance with common usage, although properly speaking, the practice to which it is applied, should be designated infant sprinkling.

That unwritten traditions are regarded by Papists, as of equal authority in faith and practice with the Holy Scriptures, none can doubt who are at all conversant with their writings. The Council of Trent asserts, that "traditions respecting both faith and manners, orally delivered, and successively preserved in the Catholic Church, are to be received with equal affection of piety and reverence, as the Books

of the Old and New Testaments.”¹ Popish writers even prefer tradition to Scripture. Thus Bellarmine says; “The Scriptures, without tradition, are neither simply necessary nor sufficient; but unwritten traditions are necessary. Tradition alone is sufficient; but the Scriptures alone are not sufficient.”² Another of their writers affirms, that “the authority of ecclesiastical traditions is more fit than the Scriptures, to ascertain any thing doubtful, even that which may be made out from Scripture; since ecclesiastical traditions and the common opinion of the church are clearer, and more open and truly inflexible; while, on the contrary, the Scriptures have frequently much obscurity in them, and may be drawn hither and thither, like a nose of wax; and, as a leaden rule, may be applied to every impious opinion.”³ Bailey, the Jesuit, thus expresses himself. “I will go farther and say, that we have as much need of tradition as of Scripture; yea, more, because the Scripture minis-

¹ Session IV. *Decreta de Canone Scripturæ*.

² *De Verbo Dei*, c. IV. Sect. 1, 6.

³ Pighius, apud Rivet. *Cathol. Orthodox*, Tract I. Quest. 6. p. 99.

ters to us only the dead and mute letter ; but tradition, by means of the ministry of the church, gives us the true sense, which is not had distinctly in the Scripture. In tradition, therefore, consists the Word of God rather than in the written letter alone. It is sufficient for a good Catholic, if he understands it is tradition ; nor need he inquire after any thing else.”¹

By tradition, these Popish authorities mean, not tradition handed down in the Scripture, but without it, and distinct from it ; unwritten tradition, apostolical tradition, so called ; tradition, not delivered by the Apostles in their writings, but, as it is pretended, communicated by word of mouth to their successors, or to the churches. That we may not mistake them, Andradius tells us, that “of necessity, those traditions also must be believed, which can be proved by no testimony of Scripture.” And Petrus a Soto still more plainly and openly affirms ; “It is a rule infallible and Catholic, that whatsoever things the Church of Rome believes, holds, and keeps, which are not de-

¹Apud Rivet. p. 142.

livered in the Scriptures, the same came by tradition from the Apostles; also, all such observances and ceremonies, whose beginning, author, and origin are not known, or cannot be found, were, beyond doubt, delivered by the Apostles.”¹ This is the sense which Romanists attach to Apostolical tradition.

Now, upon this assumed apostolical and ecclesiastical tradition, all the essential peculiarities of Popery are based. This is the prolific fountain from which they all spring. This is the standard to which they are all brought, and by which they are all confirmed. And what is there, be it ever so absurd or impious, that may not be proved by it, if once it be admitted as an authoritative rule? It is upon this ground, that Papists assert and maintain the observation of Easter and Lent; the adoration of images and relics; the worship of the virgin Mary; the sign of the cross; the invocation of saints; the sacrifice of the mass; transubstantiation; the withholding of the cup from the laity; holy water; ex-

¹ See the Abstract of the History of Popery. Part II. pp. 252, 253.

treme unction; prayers for the dead; auricular confession; the sale of pardons; purgatory; pilgrimages; monastic vows; and other superstitious opinions and practices, more numerous than we have space to mention.

Among pretended apostolical traditions, infant baptism is to be reckoned; and here lies the chief support to which its advocates appeal. Origen, who lived in the former part of the third century, and who was the first¹

¹It has been asserted by Dr. Wall and others, that Irenæus, who wrote about A. D. 178, was an advocate for infant baptism. The passage, from which this opinion has been drawn, is contained in his Treatise against Heresies, Book II. chap. 22, sect. 4. "*Omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare; omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes et parvulos et pueros et juvenes et seniores. Ideo per omnem venit aetatem, et infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes; in parvulis, parvulus, sanctificans hanc ipsam habentes aetatem, simul et exemplum illis pietatis effectus et justitiæ et subjectionis; in juvenibus juvenis, exemplum fiens et sanctificans Domino. Deinde et usque ad mortem pervenit, ut sit primogenitus ex mortuis, ipse primatum tenens in omnibus, princeps vitæ, prior omnium, et precedens omnes.*" "He"—that is, Christ—"came to redeem all by Himself; all, I say, who through him are regenerated unto God; infants, little children, boys, young men, and older persons. Hence, He passed through every age,

ancient writer that distinctly approved of infant baptism, represents it as a tradition

and for infants became an infant, sanctifying infants; among little children He became a little child, sanctifying those of this age, and, at the same time, presenting to them an example of piety, of uprightness, and of obedience; among young men He became a young man, that he might set them an example, and sanctify them to the Lord. Thus, He passed through even unto death, that He might be the first born from the dead, Himself holding the primacy in all things, the Prince of Life, superior to all, and preceding all."

It has been argued that Irenæus uses the expression, "regenerated unto God," as equivalent to baptism; and hence, that as he employs the phrase in connection with infants, there is here a distinct recognition of infant baptism. If this were true, it would follow that our author is incorrect in affirming that Origen was the first of the early fathers who approved infant baptism, since Irenæus lived more than half a century before him. That Dr. Gill, however, was aware of the existence of this passage, and had examined it well before he made the above statement, is proved by his own writings. In a treatise entitled, "*Infant Baptism an Innovation*," written previously to the one now reprinted, he says: "I come next to the words of Irenæus, where he says, 'Christ came to save all who by Him are born again unto God,' etc. In this, I shall notice only the sense of the phrase, 'born again unto God,' and the injury that is done to Irenæus, in making it signify baptism, or any thing else but the grace of regeneration. Christ and his Apostles no where

from the Apostles. The words ascribed to him are these : “ For this ”—that is, for ori-

call baptism by the name of the new birth; and the practice of so terming it among the ancients had not obtained in the time of Irenæus. The passage adduced from Justin Martyr does not prove it; and those cited from Tertullian and Clemens of Alexandria are too late. In Irenæus there are two passages in which it is pretended that this expression denotes baptism. The one is where he says, “ *Et iterum potestatem regenerationis in Deum dans discipulis, dicebat eis; Euntes, docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti.* ” “ And again, giving to his disciples the power of regeneration unto God, he said, “ Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. ” Adv. Haeres, L. III. c. 17. By this power or commission, is meant, not authority to baptize, but authority to teach the doctrine of regeneration by the Spirit of God, and its necessity to salvation, and in order to baptism. This is the first and principal part of the apostolical commission, as the order of the words show; and it is most reasonable to think, that he should so call the commission, not from its more remote and less principal part, but from its first and more important one. The other passage is where he speaks of certain heretics, as having been seduced to the denial of “ the baptism of regeneration unto God. ” L. I. c. 21, 1. But this shows rather, that baptism and regeneration, though connected, are two different things, the former being a symbol of the latter; just as the scriptural phrase, “ the baptism of repentance, ” means that

ginal sin—"the church has received a tradition from the Apostles, even to give baptism

baptism is something different from repentance; baptism being so called, because repentance is a prerequisite to it. For the same reason, it is called the baptism of regeneration, because regeneration is absolutely necessary to it. To all this I merely add, that Irenæus not only uses the word regeneration in a different sense from baptism elsewhere (see L. IV c. 59, and L. V. c. 15); but in the very passage now in dispute, he most clearly uses it in another sense; since he says, "Christ came to save all who by Him are born again unto God;" *by Him*, and not by baptism. This is explained by what is said of His sanctifying all sorts of persons, infants, little ones, young men, and old men; which cannot be understood of His baptizing them; for He baptized none, and, therefore, could not be said to regenerate any in that sense. To consider Irenæus as referring here to baptism, is to make him utter a gross falsehood, viz., that Christ came to save such and such only as are baptized. Since, then, his words, without straining them, are capable of another sense agreeable to truth; as that Christ came to save all who are regenerated by His grace,—are we not bound to believe that this latter sense is his? Indeed, to depart from this clear, literal sense of his words, which contains a well-known truth, and to fix on them a figurative, improper one, which makes him say a monstrous untruth, is most cruel usage of the good old father." Gill's Tracts, Vol. II., pp. 389-392. London, 1773.

Irenæus, in the Book from which this controverted passage is taken, is arguing against the Valentinians, a

to infants.”¹ There is, however, little reason to regard the passage as genuine. A large

Gnostic sect, who denied the actual incarnation of Christ and asserted that His whole appearance on earth was a mere vision. In opposition to this destructive error, Irenæus affirms, that the divine nature of Christ entered into real and vital union with our humanity; that He was truly man, living, breathing, speaking amongst men; and that, as the human race had been alienated from God by the fall of their first head, Adam, so Christ, by becoming their second Head, had effected their restoration. In order to achieve this, He became one of them; identifying Himself with them in all their ages and conditions: comprehending within Himself, as their Representative, all classes; teaching and exemplifying the truth to all; and, by His atoning death, bringing all into a new relation to God—a state in which mercy and grace were possible. To prevent misconception, however, the qualifying statement is added, that none would actually attain the blessing of salvation by Christ, but those who should be regenerated by Him unto God; or in other words, who should experience the transforming efficacy of His blood, applied by His Spirit. I am constrained to believe, that the simple and entire meaning of Irenæus is, that Christ came to save, and would save, all truly converted persons, of whatever age or rank;

¹ “Pro hoc ecclesia apostolis traditionem suscepit, etiam parvulis baptismum dare.” Origen, Comment. in Epistolam ad Romanos. VI. Tom. II. p. 543.

portion of the works of Origen has perished; and those that still exist, have, for the most part, come down to us, not in the original Greek, but in a Latin translation by Rufinus, a writer of the fourth century, by whom they are known to have been extensively interpolated. So clearly has this been ascertained, that no judicious critic will place confidence in any writing of Origen, which is to be found only in the translation of Rufinus.¹ Augustine, who was a warm advocate for infant baptism, also, defends it as a custom of the church not to be despised, and as an apostolical tradition generally received.² But as he was contemporary with Rufinus, he probably

and that, consequently, there is not the slightest allusion to baptism in the whole passage.

For similar views, though differing in some particulars, the reader may consult two very able articles; the one by Dr. Sears, in the Second Part of his Reply to Burgess on Baptism, in the *Christian Review*, Vol. III. pp. 208–213; the other by Dr. Chase, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. VI. pp. 646–656.—ED.

¹ See Lardner, Works, Vol. II. pp. 482. 497.

² “Hoc ecclesia a majorum fide percepit.” Serm. X. de verb. apost. c. 2; De Genesis, Lib. X. c. 21; and De Baptismo contr. Donat. Lib. IV. c. 23. 24.

took the hint of infant baptism being an apostolical tradition from the Latin translation of Origen made by the latter; since no other ecclesiastical writer previously speaks of it in this manner. The uncertainty of any apostolical tradition in favor of infant baptism seems to be conceded by Jeremy Taylor, when he says,¹ “Now a tradition apostolical, if it be not consigned with a fuller testimony than of one person, whom all after ages have condemned of many errors, will obtain so little reputation amongst those who know that things have upon greater authority pretended to derive from the Apostles and yet falsely, that it will be a great argument that he is credulous and weak that shall be determined by so weak probation in matters of so great concernment.”² Yet it is by “a probation” thus “weak,” that many are “determined” in the

¹Liberty of Propheying. Works. Vol. V. p. 552. Eden's ed. London, 1849.

² This quotation from Jeremy Taylor has not, perhaps, all the force which Dr. Gill seems to ascribe to it. The Bishop, in pleading for toleration to the Anabaptists, as he calls them, gives a summary of the arguments adduced in favor of infant baptism, and then of those which were urged against it. It is in the latter connection, that

matter of infant baptism; for not only do Popish writers, as Bellarmine and others, make it an unwritten, apostolical tradition, but even some Protestant Pedobaptists show a good will to place it among the unwritten sayings of Christ, or of his Apostles; and satisfy themselves with a supposition so gratuitous. Thus Mr. Fuller, a late Pedobaptist writer, says, "We do freely confess that there is neither express precept nor precedent in the New Testament for the baptizing of infants; yet, as St. John tells us, that Jesus did many things which were not written,¹ for aught that

the passage referred to occurs. He states it, therefore, as the opinion of the opponents of infant baptism, not as his own. A much more satisfactory admission on the same point is afforded by Neander, in his Church History, Vol. I. p. 314, Torrey's Translation. "Origen, in whose system, infant baptism could readily find its place, declares it to be an apostolical tradition; an expression, by the way, which cannot be regarded as of much weight in this age, when the inclination was so strong to trace every institution, which was considered of special importance, to the Apostles; and when so many walls of separation, hindering the freedom of prospect, had already been set up between this and the apostolic age.—ED.

¹ John xxi. 25.

appears to the contrary, infant baptism may have been one of them.”¹ In like manner, Mr. Walker argues, “It does not follow that our Saviour gave no precept for the baptizing of infants, because no such precept is particularly expressed in Scripture; for our Saviour spoke many things to His disciples concerning the kingdom of God, both before His passion, and after His crucifixion, which are not written in the Scriptures; and who can say, but that among those many unwritten sayings of His, there might be an express precept for infant baptism?”² And Mr. Leigh, one of the disputants in the Portsmouth Discussion, suggests, that “although infant baptism is not to be found in the writings of the Apostle Paul extant in the Scriptures, yet it might be in some writings of his which are lost, and not now extant.”³ All this is plainly giving up

¹ *Infant's Advocate*, p. 71, 150. ² *Modest Plea*, p. 268.

³ *Narrative of the Portsmouth Disputation*, pp. 16–18.

We find Dr. Woods of Andover making a similar concession. In his *Lectures on Infant Baptism*, p. 11, he says, “It is a plain case, that there is no express precept respecting infant baptism in our Sacred Writings. The proof, then, that it is a divine institution must be made

infant baptism as contained in the Sacred Writings, and placing it upon unwritten, apostolical tradition; and that, too, conjectural and uncertain.

out in some other way." What can this other way mean, but tradition? It must surely be his intention to affirm that a rite was ordained by Christ, and practised by the Apostles, for which the Scriptures contain no precept. How can he know it? Whatever he may call the channel by which he professes to have received the proof of such a fact, it resolves itself into tradition; for to admit as of divine origin an institution concerning which the Bible is silent, is to give up the sufficiency of revelation, and accept the authority of tradition. Prof. Stuart, also, in the *Biblical Repository* for 1833, p. 385, says, "Commands, or plain and certain examples, in the New Testament relative to it"—that is, infant baptism—"I do not find." And Dr. Neander, in his *Planting and Training*, p. 101, declares, "As baptism was closely united with a conscious entrance on Christian communion, faith and baptism were always connected with one another; and thus it is in the highest degree probable that baptism was performed only in instances where both could meet together, and that the practice of infant baptism was unknown to the apostolic age." In his *Church History*, Vol. I., p. 311, Torrey's Translation, he makes the same admission in still stronger terms. "Baptism was at first administered only to adults, as men were accustomed to conceive baptism and faith as strictly connected. We have all reason for not deriving infant baptism from

Now, infant baptism, with all the ceremonies attending it, for which also apostolical tradition is pretended, makes a very considerable figure in Popish pageantry. Romanists administer the rite with circumstances of great pomp and show; such as the consecration of the water; the presence of sponsors, who answer the interrogatories, and make the renunciation, in the name of the child; exorcisms, exsufflations, crossings, the use of salt, spittle, and oil. Before the baptism, the water is consecrated with much solemn parade. First, the priest makes an exorcism; breathing three times into the water in the figure of a cross, and saying, "I adjure thee, O creature of water!" Then he divides the water after the manner of a cross, and makes three or four crossings. Next, he takes a horn of oil, and pours it three times upon the water in the form of a cross, and makes a

apostolical institution." Now, if any trace of infant baptism were to be found in the New Testament, or in any writing pertaining to the first age of the church, it could not have escaped the searching eye of Neander, whose knowledge of primitive antiquity is admitted by all to be unsurpassed in depth and comprehensiveness.—ED.

prayer, that the font may be sanctified, and the Eternal Trinity be present ; saying, “ Descend from heaven, and sanctify this water, and give grace and virtue, that he who is baptized according to the command of Thy Christ, may be crucified, and die, and be buried, and rise again, with Him.”

The sponsors, or sureties, then recite on behalf of the child, the creed and the Lord’s prayer, renounce the devil and all his works, and answer the questions put in the name of the child. The form of interrogation and reply according to the Roman ritual, is this ; “ The name of the infant being called, the presbyter must say, Dost thou renounce Satan ? Answer, I do renounce. And all his works ? Answer, I do renounce. And all his pomps ? Answer, I do renounce.” Three times these questions are put, and three times the sureties answer. The interrogations are sometimes made by a priest, sometimes by a presbyter, and sometimes by an exorcist. The following question is also added, “ Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth ?” To which the sponsors reply, “ I do believe.”

Previous to being baptized, the infant is breathed upon, and exorcised, that the wicked spirit may be driven from it, and that it may be delivered from the power of darkness, and be translated into the kingdom of Christ. The following is the formula for this part of the service prescribed by the Papal code. "Let him—the minister, priest, deacon, or exorcist—blow into the face of the person to be baptized, three times, saying, Go out, thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Comforter." That of Gregory is slightly different. "I exorcise thee, O unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou go out and depart from this servant of God."

After the infant has been exorcised and blessed, salt is put into its mouth, as a token of its being seasoned with the salt of wisdom; and as an intimation that "by the doctrines of faith, and by the gift of grace, he shall be preserved from the corruption of sin, experience a relish for good works, and be nurtured with the food of divine knowledge." The priest first blesses the salt after this manner, "I exorcise thee, O creature of salt;" and then,

having blessed it, he puts it into the mouth of the infant, saying, "Receive the salt of wisdom unto life everlasting."

The nostrils and ears of infants at their baptism are also touched with spittle by the priest, to indicate that their senses are opened to receive the savor of the knowledge of God, and to hear his commands; and that "as sight was given to the blind man mentioned in the Gospel, whom the Lord, having spread clay on his eyes, commanded to wash them in the waters of Siloam, so by the efficacy of holy baptism, a light is let in on the mind which enables it to discern heavenly truth." Formerly spittle was put upon the eyes and the tongue; but that part of the ceremony seems now to be laid aside. And yet no farther back than the birth of king James I, it appears to have been in use; since, at his baptism, his mother sent word to Hamilton, archbishop of St. Andrews, who was to officiate on the occasion, to forbear the use of spittle, saying, "She would not have a pocky priest to spit in her child's mouth."¹ The

¹ Abstract of the History of Popery, part I, p. 114.

prelate, it was well known, had led so licentious a life, as to have become diseased through his debaucheries.¹ In queen Mary's reign, the practice seems to have been common; for when the martyr, Robert Smith, was asked by Bonner, in what particulars Papists dissented from the word of God in the administration of baptism, he answered; "First, in hallowing your water; in conjuring the same; in baptizing children with anointing and spitting in their mouths, mingled with salt; and with many other lewd ceremonies, not one point of which is able to be proved in God's order."² All of which he calls "a mingle-mangle," and "a shameful blasphemy against Christ."

Chrism is another ceremony used both before and after baptism. The parts anointed, are the breast, shoulders, and head; the breast, that no remains of the latent enemy may reside in the person baptized; the shoulders, that he may be fortified and strengthened to do good works to the glory of God; and the

¹ Vide Rivet, Animadv. in Grot. Annotat. in Cassander, Consultat, p 72.

² Fox's Acts and Monuments, folio, vol. III, p. 400. [Vol. VIII. p. 351. Cattley's ed., London, 1838.]

head, to denote, "that from the moment of his baptism, he is united as a member to Christ, his Head, and engrafted on his body; and that he is, therefore, called a Christian from Christ, as Christ is so called from Chrism." This anointing is made in the form of a cross. On applying it to the shoulders, the priest says, "Flee, thou unclean spirit, give honor to the living and true God." On applying it to the breast, he says, "Go out, thou unclean spirit, give place to the Holy Ghost." And when he applies it to the head, he says to the candidate, "I annoint thee with the oil of salvation, that thou mayest have life everlasting."

The next ceremony is that of signing the infant with the sign of the cross. This is made in several parts of the body, especially the forehead, eyes, and ears, to declare, that "by the mystery of baptism, the senses of the person baptized are opened and strengthened, to enable him to receive God, and to understand and observe his commandments;" and to signify that he is now consecrated by the cross to the service of Christ, and to a manful resistance against Satan. In ancient times,

honey and milk, or wine and milk, were given after baptism; though the practice has now fallen into disuse. Infants were also admitted to the Lord's supper. This custom continued for several centuries in the Latin Church, and is still preserved in the Greek Church.¹

Should the reader require proof of the use of these various observances, he may consult an able treatise "on the ancient rites and ceremonies of baptism," by Joseph Vicecomes, a learned Papist, as he is denominated by Dr. Wall; where he will find them largely treated, and the authorities for them fully cited. These ceremonies are also fully rehearsed and condemned by the ancient Waldenses, in a tract on Antichrist, supposed to have been written early in the twelfth century.²

¹ For a similar account of the baptismal ceremonies practised by Romanists, see Cramp's Text Book of Popery, pp. 122-124. London, 1839.—Ed.

² Moreland's History of the Churches of Piedmont, p. 173

To this treatise Perrin assigns the date of 1120. But as it contains quotations from the Scriptures with the division of chapters and verses; which did not come into use until the latter part of the thirteenth century; either the date is too early, or this division was afterwards introduced into it by some copyist.—Ed.

It may, perhaps, be asked, to what purpose is this account of the ceremonies observed by Papists in the administration of baptism to infants, since they are not used by Protestant Pedobaptists? I answer, it is to show what a prominent place infant baptism, with the ostentatious ritual attending it, holds in the system Popery; and that, being thus interwoven with its very structure, and contributing largely to its pomp and parade, it may with propriety be called a part of it. Besides, although the ceremonies above described are not all practiced now by any class of Protestant Pedobaptists, yet several of them are still retained by many who call themselves Protestants. Of this kind, are sponsors; the interrogations made to them, and the answers given, in the name of infants; the renunciation of the devil and all his works; and signing with the sign of the cross. And since these and the others all claim apostolical authority, and most of them, if not all, have as good and as early a pretension to it as infant baptism itself; those, who admit *that* on this footing, ought to admit *these*, its adjuncts, also. On this subject the reader is referred to a treatise

by me, entitled, *The Argument from Apostolical Tradition in favor of Infant Baptism Considered.*

Most of the ceremonies which have been mentioned, are noticed by Basil, who lived in the fourth century, as then in use, and as derived, not from Scripture, but from tradition. Speaking of the sign of the cross in baptism, he says, "We sign with the sign of the cross. Who has taught this in Scripture? We consecrate the water of baptism and the oil of unction, as well as him who receives baptism. From what Scriptures? Is it not from private and secret tradition? Moreover, the anointing with oil, what passage in Scripture teaches this? Now a man is thrice immersed; from whence is it derived or enjoined? Also the rest of what is done in baptism, as the renouncing of Satan and his angels; from what Scripture have we it? Is not this from private and secret tradition?"¹ And, in like manner, Augustine speaks of exorcisms and exsufflations in baptism, as derived from ancient tradition, and of universal use in the

¹ De Spiritu Sancto, c. 27.

church.¹ Now, whoever receives infant baptism on the ground of apostolical tradition, ought to receive these also, since they rest on precisely the same foundation.

The various ceremonies noticed above, however they may have been subsequently modified and extended, all go back to a very remote antiquity. They are coeval with infant baptism itself, and some of them even preceded it. Pedobaptism was first recognized as an established institution of the church, in the early part of the fifth century. Several doctors in the preceding century had, indeed, espoused and asserted it; and the practice had gradually spread, especially in North Africa. But it was not until the provincial council of Mileve, more correctly called the council of Carthage, held about, A. D., 418, that any canon was passed in its favor. This Bishop Taylor acknowledges.² Grotius also takes the same ground, and affirms this to be the first council in which the custom was men-

¹ De Peccato Orig. L. II. c. 40. De Nupt. et concup. L. I. c. 20: L. II. c. 18.

² Liberty of Prophecyng. Works, Vol. V. p. 552.—Eden's ed

tioned with approbation.¹ And Augustine, in his book against the Donatists, written before the meeting of this council, while he asserts that the church had always held infant baptism, and that it was most rightly believed to have been delivered by apostolical tradition, nevertheless confesses that as yet it had not been instituted or sanctioned by the decree of any council.² What, however, had not then been done, was effected soon afterwards, and, probably, in a great degree, through his own influence. At the council mentioned above, over which he himself presided, the following canon was enacted. “Also it is our pleasure, that whosoever denies that new-born infants ought to be baptized—let him be anathema.”³ The decrees of this council were sent to Pope Innocent I., and by him approved ;⁴ thus identifying the then nascent Papacy with the earliest canonical sanction of infant baptism. If, then, this rite first received the authority of law from a Popish council, and was first confirmed

¹ Comment. on Matt. xix. 14.

² De Baptismo contra Donatist. L. IV. c. 24.

³ Dupin's Eccl. History Vol. I. p. 635. Dublin, 1623.

⁴ Madgeburg Centuriators, cent. V. c. 9, pp. 468, 473.

as an established rule by the Pope himself, may it not well be called a part of Popery? The two are, in fact, indissolubly united—one in their origin, their growth, and their results. The same mother-heresy,—Baptismal Regeneration—which gave birth to Popery, gave birth to Infant Baptism. They were engendered in the same dark womb of ignorance and superstition. They came forth together. They grew up together. Together they overspread the nations. And together shall they disappear before the light of Christ's Gospel, and the brightness of his coming.

Further, baptism by immersion, which for thirteen hundred years was generally observed in the Latin Church, and is still universally practiced in the Greek Church, was first changed into sprinkling by the Papists. This was not a mere change in the form of baptism. It was the abrogation of baptism itself. For it is not, as some consider, a matter of indifference whether much or little water be used in baptism. Immersion belongs to the very essence of baptism, and without it, there can be no baptism. As Sir John Floyer observes, "it is no circumstance, but the very

act of baptism.”¹ The same writer also declares, that “aspersion, or sprinkling, was brought into the church by the Popish Schoolmen, and that the English Dissenters adopted it from them. The Schoolmen employed their wits to find out reasons for the alteration to sprinkling, and brought it into use in the twelfth century.”² And it must be observed, to the honor of the Church of England, that it has not established sprinkling in baptism to this day; sprinkling being permitted only when it is certified, that the child is weak, and not able to bear dipping. In all other cases, the Rubric orders the priest to dip the child warily. The legal sanction of sprinkling in Great Britain came from the Presbyterians during the civil war. The Westminster Assembly of Divines decided for sprinkling against dipping by a majority of only one; twenty-five voting for it, and twenty-four in opposition to it. On their recommendation, it was established by Act of Parliament in 1664.³ They borrowed it from Geneva;

¹ Essay to restore Dipping, p. 44.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. pp. 12, 22.

and Geneva borrowed it from Rome. That this innovation had its rise from the authority of the Pope, Dr. Wall himself acknowledges, when he affirms that the sprinkling of infants is from Popery. "All the nations of Christians," he says, "that do now, or formerly did, submit to the authority of the Bishop of Rome, do ordinarily baptize their infants by pouring or sprinkling. And though the English received not this custom till after the decay of Popery, yet they have since received it from such neighboring nations as had begun it in the time of the Pope's power. But all other Christians in the world, who never owned the Pope's usurped power, do, and ever did, dip their infants in their ordinary use."¹ Thus does it appear that infant baptism, both with respect to its subjects, and the mode in which it is now administered, may, with great propriety, be called a part and branch of Popery.

But not only is it a part of Popery, and thus contributing to strengthen it, as a part

¹History of Infant Baptism, Vol. II. p. 414. Oxford, 1835.

does the whole ; it is, moreover, its pillar and main support. It is the source from which Romanists, in contending with Protestants, draw the strongest arguments in favor of their traditions, and of the authority of the church to alter the rites of divine worship ; on which, as we have seen, the essential characteristics of Popery depend. Papal disputants sadly embarrass Protestant Pedobaptists, when they bring forward infant baptism, and urge their opponents to prove it by Scripture, both in its subjects and in its mode ; and if they cannot do this, then either to give it up entirely, or allow of unscriptural traditions and the authority of the church ; adding the perplexing question, that if they admit unwritten traditions and the custom of the church in one case, why do they reject them in others ? This way of arguing, as Mr. Stennett observes,¹ was used by Cardinal Du Perron, in his reply to king James I., and by Mr. John Ainsworth against Mr. Henry Ainsworth ; and by Fisher, the Jesuit, against archbishop Laud. An instance of the same kind, he adds, is furnished in the controversy

¹ Answer to Russen, p. 173, et sequitar.

between Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, and a learned anonymous writer, said to be M. De La Roque, pastor of the Reformed Church at Rouen, in Normandy. The bishop, in order to defend the withholding of the cup from the laity in the Lord's supper, according to the authority of the church, urged that infant baptism, both as to subject and mode, was unscriptural, resting solely on the authority of tradition and custom; with which, nevertheless, the pretended Reformed complied; and, therefore, why should they refuse compliance in the other case? This reasoning called forth from his antagonist the ingenuous confession, that to baptize by sprinkling was certainly an abuse, derived from the Romish Church without due examination, as well as many other things, which he and his brethren were resolved to correct. He then thanked the bishop for undeceiving them; and freely confessed that, in regard to the baptism of infants, there is nothing in the Gospel to justify the necessity of it; and that the passages produced only prove, at most, that it is permitted, or, rather, that it is not forbidden.

An amusing incident of a similar kind is

told concerning a Mr. Jeremiah Ives, a Baptist minister, famous for his talent at disputation, who lived in the time of king Charles II. The king having heard of his peculiar skill, sent for him to dispute with a Romish priest. This he did, in the presence of the king and of many others, dressed in the habit of an Episcopal clergyman. Mr. Ives pressed the priest closely, showing that to whatever antiquity Romanists pretended, their doctrines and practices could by no means be proved to be apostolical; since they are not to be found in any writings which remain of the apostolic age. The priest, after much wrangling, at last replied, that this argument of Mr. Ives was of as much force against infant baptism, as against the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. To which Mr. Ives answered, that he readily granted what he said to be true. On this, the priest broke up the conference, saying, that he had been cheated, and would proceed no farther; for he came to dispute with a clergyman of the established Church, and it was now evident, that this was an Anabaptist preacher. The behavior of the

priest afforded his majesty, and all present, not a little diversion.¹

As Protestant Pedobaptists are urged by this argument to admit the unwritten traditions of the Papists; so Pedobaptist Dissenters are pressed, on the same ground, to comply with those ceremonies of the Church of England, which have been retained from the Church of Rome. Dr. Whitby employs this argument with special force, when, after having pleaded for some condescension to Dissenters, in order to reconcile them to the Church, he adds; “And, on the other hand, if, notwithstanding the evidence produced, that baptism by immersion is suitable to the institution both of our Lord and His Apostles, and was by them ordained to represent our burial with Christ; and so our dying unto sin, and our conformity to his resurrection by newness of life, as the Apostle clearly maintains the meaning of that rite;² if, I say, notwithstanding this, all our Dissenters”—Pedobaptist Dissenters he must mean—“do agree to sprinkle the bap-

¹ Crosby's Hist. of the Baptists, Vol. IV. pp. 247, 248.

² Rom. vi. 3-6.

tized infant; why may they not as well submit to the significant ceremonies imposed by our Church? For, since it is as lawful to add to Christ's institutions a significant ceremony, as to diminish a significant ceremony which He or His Apostles instituted, and use another in its stead, which they never did institute; what reason can they have to do the latter, and yet refuse submission to the former? And why should not the peace and union of the church be as prevailing with them, to perform the one, as is their mercy to the infant's body, to neglect the other?"¹ Thus infant baptism is used as the grand plea for compliance with the ceremonies both of the Church of Rome and the Church of England. It is, therefore, the chief prop of these Antichristian Hierarchies—the final appeal to which they resort for countenance in their unscriptural practices. And so triumphant is this appeal, that no Pedobaptist Protestant or Dissenter has ever been able to stand before it.

Further, it is by means of infant baptism that "the Man of Sin" has spread his baneful influence over many nations. This is abun-

¹ Protestant Reconciler, p. 289.

dantly evident from the fact, that through the christening of children, introduced by him, he has made whole nations nominally Christian, and has applied to them the designation of Christendom; thus extending the limits of his universal church, over which, as the pretended Vicar of Christ on earth, he claims absolute power and authority. By the same means, he retains his influence over these nations, keeps them in awe of his spiritual prerogatives, and holds them in servile subjection to his will. With this view, he sedulously inculcates the pernicious dogma, that, by their baptism, received in infancy, they are brought into the fold of the church, within which there is salvation, and out of which there is none; and that, therefore, if they renounce their baptism, or apostatize from the church, they consign themselves to inevitable damnation. Thus, by his menaces and anathemas, he maintains his usurped dominion over the submissive and trembling nations. And if, at any time, one of these nations has courage to oppose him, and to act in disobedience to his mandates, he immediately lays it under an interdict; suspending the sacraments, all public prayers, burials,

and christenings; closing the churches; and forbidding the clergy to administer their functions to any but those who, at a great price, purchase the privilege from Rome.¹ By a superstitious dread of these prohibitions, particularly that which withholds baptism from children, nations are induced to comply with the demands of the Papal power, however oppressive and tyrannical they may be. For it appears most dreadful to parents, that their children should be deprived of baptism, by which, as they are taught to believe, they are made Christians, and without which there is no salvation. Hence whole kingdoms have been known to yield to the most arbitrary exactions of Rome, rather than lose what is deemed so very important. What a tremendous influence, therefore, must infant baptism give to Popery; and how cunningly is it adapted to uphold its power.

But the baneful influence, which Antichrist has extended over the nations, through infant baptism, is yet further seen in that poisonous

¹ Abstract of the History of Popery, Part I. p. 463.
Fox's Acts and Monuments, folio, Vol. 1. p. 326.

notion, propagated by him, that the sacraments, and especially baptism, confer grace by their intrinsic efficacy; "ex opere operato" from the mere fact of their administration. In other words, he has taught that baptism takes away sin, regenerates men, and saves their souls. This is charged upon him by the ancient Waldenses, in the treatise on Antichrist, to which I have already referred. Speaking of the corruptions of the Papal Hierarchy, they say: "The third work of Antichrist consists in this, that he attributes the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit to the dead, outward act of baptism. In this faith, he baptizes children, teaching that salvation is thus to be obtained. On this ground, he confers orders and other sacraments; and thereon builds all his Christianity. All which is against the Holy Spirit."¹

The same Popish notion is argued against and exposed by Robert Smith, the martyr, in his examination before Bonner. In reply to a statement of the latter, that "infants are damned, if they die without being baptized,"

¹ Morland's Hist. of the Churches of Piedmont. p. 148.

he asked this question; "I pray, you, my lord, show me, are we saved by water or by Christ?" To which Bonner answered, "By both." "Then," said Smith, "the water died for our sins, and so must ye say that the water hath life, and it being our servant, and created for us, is our Saviour. This, my lord, is a good doctrine, is it not?"¹

The leaven of this old and destructive error yet remains even in some Protestant churches, which have retained it from Rome. Hence a child, when baptized, is declared to be regenerate, and thanks are returned to God, that it is regenerate. And when it is capable of being catechised, it is taught to say that, in its baptism, it was made a child of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Such instruction cannot but have a powerful tendency to take off all concern from persons when grown up, respecting any vital change of heart, as necessary to prepare them for heaven; and to encourage in them the fatal presumption, that, notwithstanding their evident want of grace, they yet

¹Fox's Acts and Monuments, folio, Vol. III, p. 400 [Vol. VII. p. 352, Cattley's edition, London, 1838.]

are members of Christ, and shall never perish—are children and heirs of God, and, therefore, must certainly inherit eternal life. The father of lies himself, as Dr. Owen justly observes,¹ could not have devised a more pernicious doctrine, or one more calculated to insure the final ruin of the soul. If, then, through infant baptism, this fatal heresy reigns supreme in lands Papal, and is still widely diffused and powerful in lands Protestant, are we not warranted in saying, that by means of infant baptism Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over the nations?

¹ Theologoumena, L. VI. c. III. p. 477.

CHAPTER III.

RELATION OF INFANT BAPTISM TO CHURCH
ESTABLISHMENTS.

NOTHING can be more evident than that infant baptism is the basis of national churches, and, therefore, the parent of all the mischiefs which arise from the unhallowed union of the spiritual and the profane in the same religious community. If a church be national, it is of course, composed of all the men, women, and children in the nation, who have not voluntarily withdrawn from it. Of such a church children are originally members, either by birth, and as soon as they are born, being born in the church; that is, in a Christian country, which is the church; or rather by baptism, as it is generally expressed. Thus, according to the order of the Episcopal Church, at the baptism of a child, the minister says, "We receive this child into the congregation of

Christ's flock."¹ By the Assembly of Divines, baptism is called "a sacrament of the New Testament, whereby the parties baptized, are solemnly admitted into the visible church."² Of this the following explanation is given in the next answer of the Catechism, in which the general proposition, though correct, is virtually nullified by the exception made in the case of infants, who form a large majority of the baptized. "Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers to the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and their obedience to Him; but infants, descending from parents either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptized."³ Calvin, according to whose plan of church government at Geneva that of the Scotch Church was modeled, denominates baptism "a solemn introduction into the church of God." And Mr. Baxter argues, that "if there be neither precept nor example of admitting church members in all the New

¹ Liturgy of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

² Larger Catechism, p. 337. ³ Ibid. p. 338.

Testament but by baptism, then all that are now admitted ought to come in by baptism. But there is neither precept nor example in all the New Testament of admitting church members but by baptism. Therefore, they ought to come in the same way now." So then infants, becoming members of a national church by baptism, are originally of it, and constitute the materials of which it is composed. It is, in fact, by the baptism of infants, that a national church is supplied with members, and is supported and maintained. Hence, it may be truly said, that infant baptism is the foundation of a national church, and is, indeed, the very sinews, strength, and life of it. And infants, having been thus admitted members by baptism, continue such when grown up, even though most dissolute in their conduct, as multitudes of them are. Many, instead of being treated as church members, deserve to be sent to the House of Correction—a punishment which some of them receive; and others are guilty of such flagitious crimes, that they die an infamous death. Yet even these die in the communion of the church.

And thus the church and the world are united and kept together till death doth them part

The Independents, according to their principles, would indeed separate the church and the world. But, in practice, they cannot do it, being fettered and hampered by infant baptism and infant membership. The embarrassment which this subject occasions them, appears from the great diversity of opinions which they entertain respecting it, and from the endless inconsistencies in which it involves them. They seem sadly at a loss what to do with infant baptism, or where to place it. Some place it on the interest of the infant in the covenant of grace. But here they often contradict themselves and one another. At one time they say it is interest in the covenant of grace which gives infants a right to baptism; at another, that it is by baptism they are brought into the covenant; and then again, that it is not in the inward part of the covenant that they are interested, but only in its external part, where hypocrites and graceless persons may be; but what that external part is, no mortal can tell. Others, not feeling so certain that their infant seed, as such, are

all interested in the covenant of grace, say it is not that, but the church covenant into which godly parents enter, which gives their children with them a right to church membership and baptism. Children in their minority, it is said, covenant with their parents, and so become church members, and this entitles them to baptism;¹ for, according to the original theory of the Puritans of New England, none but members of a visible church were to be baptized;² though Dr. Godwin is of a different opinion.³ Hence only such as were children of parents in regular connection with the church were admitted to baptism.⁴ In the case of excommunicated members, the children born during the period of their excommunication, might not be baptized.⁵ Children, when baptized, were not considered confirmed members, until they

¹ Disputation concerning church members and their children at Boston, p. 12, 13. Hooker's survey of Church Discipline, Part III., pp. 24, 25.

² Cotton's Way of the Churches in New England, p. 81. Boston Disputation, p. 4. Defence of the Nine Propositions, p. 115.

³ Government of the Churches of Christ, p. 337.

⁴ Defence of the Nine Propositions, p. 69.

⁵ Cotton's Way, p. 85.

professed faith and repentance;¹ yet, during their minority which, after the example of Ishmael, reached till they were about sixteen years of age, they were regarded as real members to such intents and purposes, that if their parents were dismissed to other churches, their names were to be inserted with them in the letters of dismissal.² They were also viewed, while their minority continued, as under the watch and care of the church, and subject to its admonitions and censures, with a view to their moral correction and improvement;³ though not in such a way as to render them liable to public discipline and excommunication.⁴

The original Puritans thought, that by the covenant seed, who have a right to baptism and church membership, were meant only the seed of parents in immediate fellowship with the church, and not of progenitors more remote.⁵ Mr. Cotton says, "Infants cannot claim right to baptism but in the right of one

¹ Cotton's Holiness of church members, p. 19. Boston Disputation, p. 3.

² Ibid. p. 15. ³ Cambridge Platform, p. 18.

⁴ Boston Disputation, p. 14. ⁵ Ibid. p. 19.

of their parents or both ; where neither of the parents can claim right to the Lord's supper, there their infants cannot claim right to baptism."¹ Afterwards, however, he qualifies this statement by observing, "It may be considered, whether the children may not be baptized, where either the grandfather or grandmother have made profession of their faith and repentance before the church, and are still living to undertake for the christian education of the child ; or if these fail, what hinders but that if the parents will resign their infant to be educated in the house of any godly member of the church, the child may be lawfully baptized in the right of its household governor."² But Mr. Hooker asserts, that "since children as children have no right to baptism, it belongs not to any predecessors, whether near or remote, to confer a right to this privilege."³ In the term, predecessors, he includes all except the parents themselves ; such as grand parents, great grand parents, etc. Thus, too, the ministers and messengers

¹ Cotton's Way of Churches, p. 81. ² Ibid. 115.

³ Survey of Church Discipline, part III. p. 13.

of the Congregational Churches that met at the Savoy, declare, that “not only those, who do actually possess faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, are to be baptized; but also infants, one or both of whose parents are believers, are to be admitted to the ordinance, and those only.”¹

Among the commissioners appointed to review the Book of Common Prayer, in the beginning of the reign of Charles II., those of the Presbyterian persuasion brought forward the following motion: “Whereas, there are divers learned, pious, and peaceable ministers, who judge it unlawful to baptize not only children whose parents are atheists, infidels, heretics, or unbaptized, but also such whose parents are excommunicated persons, fornicators, or otherwise notorious and scandalous sinners; we desire that they may not be enforced to baptize the children of such, until they have made an open profession of their repentance before baptism.”² At the present day, however, the churches of this denomination, except in a few instances, do not adhere

¹ Declaration of Faith and Order. Chap. xxix. p. 48.

² Proceedings of the Commissioners, p. 22.

to the principles and practices of their predecessors ; but admit to baptism, not only the children of church members, but of those who are not ; and, indeed, the children of any, whether religious or irreligious, who may apply to them for that purpose.¹

But supposing that, in all cases, none but the children of parents in full communion with the church were admitted to baptism—would this remedy the evil? What are such children? No better than others. Like all others, they are born in sin, carnal and depraved. They belong to the world, notwithstanding their religious parentage, until they are called out of it by the effectual grace of God. As they grow up, they show themselves to be of the world, living in accordance with its principles, and manifesting the same sinful and corrupt nature which others exhibit. Some of them even become grossly immoral. Yet no notice is taken of them in the way of censure or expulsion ; but they retain their membership,

¹ This must be understood as having special reference to the Presbyterians of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It is not true, at least in its full extent, of this excellent denomination of Christians in our own country.—ED.

into which they were brought in their infancy, and continue in it to the day of their death. And if this be not uniting and keeping the church and the world together, I know not what is.¹

The support which infant baptism lends to worldly and national churches, is moreover

¹ Who can estimate the mischiefs which have sprung from such a union? What incalculable injury has been done to the souls of those, who have thus been trained up in the persuasion, that, by their baptism in infancy, they are incorporated into the Church of Christ, invested with a special interest in the covenant of Grace, and made the peculiar objects of the Divine favor! And what immense evils have thereby been inflicted on the cause of the Saviour! How has the lustre of His Gospel been dimmed, its strength weakened, and its progress delayed! And how has His blood-bought Church, ordained by Him to be the fold of His sheep—the home of the renewed—in the world, but not of it—been robbed of its true function, by being converted into a common receptacle for the pure and the impure; a great drag-net, inclosing all alike! Infant baptism tends directly to amalgamate the church with the world. It fills it with secular elements; subjects it to the control of unregenerate men; surrounds it, where circumstances are favorable, with civil endowments, patronage, and power; and thus transforms the Bride of Christ into the bedizened courtesan of the State!—ED.

evident from the fact that it practically nullifies all the arguments, which are commonly adduced to show their unscriptural character. It is said, and said truly, in opposition to such organizations, that the members of a visible church are represented in the New Testament as “a spiritual seed”—“lively stones,”—“called to be saints”—such as, in the judgment of enlightened charity, may be accounted sincere believers. But are baptized infants of this description? The holiness attributed to them, is only a federal holiness, and that altogether chimerical. Are they saints by effectual calling? Can they, on scriptural grounds, be deemed holy? Do they possess the qualities which, in the New Testament, are invariably ascribed to church members? And if they cannot, even in the widest charity, be regarded as saints, and yet are admitted by baptism into the church, why may not others be so admitted, of whom it cannot be declared that they are regenerate persons?

Besides it is correctly affirmed by the Independents, that members of Gospel churches are not only such as have been called by the Spirit of God, but such as manifest their obe-

dience to that calling by a corresponding profession and conduct; such, moreover, as are known to each other by their confession of faith wrought in them by divine power; and such as willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord and to one another by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel.¹ Now do infants possess this character? Do they evince, by an outward profession and walk, their obedience to a divine inward call? If they do not, and yet are received as church members, why may not others be so received, who give no more evidence than they do? Do they make a confession of faith wrought in them? Does it appear that they have such a faith? And is a confession made, and so made, as to be known by their fellow members? If not, and yet they are received and owned as members, then why may not others be so recognized, who make no more confession than they do? Do infants consent to walk with the church of Christ, and give up themselves to

¹ Savoy—Declaration, p. 57.

the Lord and to one another, and profess to be subject to the ordinances of the Gospel? If they do not, as most certainly they do not, and yet are acknowledged as members, why may not others be acknowledged as members on the same footing? Is it objected to a national church, that persons of the worst characters are members of it, and that by this means the church is filled with men very disreputable and scandalous in their lives? And is not this true of those in congregational churches, who, admitted as members in their infancy, when grown up are very wicked and immoral, and yet their membership continues? Why, then, may not national churches be tolerated, notwithstanding the above objections? From all these reasons, therefore, I deem myself fully warranted in saying, that there cannot be a complete separation of the church from the world, nor any thorough reformation in religion, until infant baptism is wholly removed.

CHAPTER IV.

INFLUENCE OF PEDOBAPTISM ON PROTESTANT
CHURCHES HISTORICALLY DEVELOPED.[BY THE EDITOR.¹]

A SEARCHING inquiry into the effects of infant baptism on Protestant communities, would furnish most instructive, though painful results. Such an investigation, impartially conducted, would soon show, that this corruption, wherever it is not restrained by antagonistic causes, always tends to Romanism, or to Rationalism. In some soils, and under some influences, it

¹ At the period when Dr. Gill wrote, the influence of Pedobaptism on the churches of the Reformation had only begun to show itself. That influence has since been much more fully manifested. The editor was, therefore, requested to prepare and insert a chapter on this subject, containing the substance of what we may well suppose Dr. Gill would have said, had he lived in our day and seen what we have seen. As the chapter thus prepared is closely related to the preceding argument, and depends upon it, it was thought better to publish it in this connection than in an independent form.—ED.

becomes the prolific seed of all that is most baleful in the Papal system. Such was its development in the ancient church. Germinating first in North Africa, the hot-bed of superstition and asceticism, it was quickly transplanted into Egypt, where it thrived luxuriantly among the dreamy speculatists of Alexandria. Thence it spread throughout the Eastern and Western empires, growing up, side by side, with reverence for the outward and the tangible in religion; the love of imposing ceremonies; the adoration of saints and relics; the worship of images; prelatic power, and priestly domination; until, at length, the Roman Hierarchy, propped and buttressed by infant baptism, cast its shadow over the nations.

Similar has been its tendency in the Church of England. At the period of the Reformation, the aspect of this Church was, in some respects, bright with promise. Her creed was, in the main, eminently evangelical. Her early teachers were men of great scriptural knowledge, of fervent piety, and unblemished lives. A large portion of her laity was also pervaded by a growing love for a pure Gospel. But

while she abjured the supremacy of Rome, abolished the mass, and purged out the grosser abominations of Popery; yet, by adhering to infant baptism, with its natural concomitants, Episcopacy, and a State-Establishment, she retained a principle which was calculated to undo all her work, and revive within her own communion the most essential characteristics of the "Man of Sin." The sphere, in which this insidious leaven was thus left to operate, was particularly fitted to develop its influence. The national mind of England, either from constitutional structure, or the long schooling of circumstances, has a strong papistic element. Sturdy and independent in matters of civil polity, it evinces a strange propensity to be led in religion. It bows to authority. It trembles before august names, and lofty pretensions. It is fond of pomp and external show. It venerates the time-honored, the far-descended. In such a state of society, infant baptism found a congenial home, and free scope to work out its Popish tendencies. And how successfully it has done so, the present religious position of that country clearly shows. The land which, around the martyr-

fires of Smithfield, swore eternal hatred to Popery, is now full of Popish dignitaries, Popish priests, and Popish proselytes. The Church, for which reformers toiled, and confessors bled, is Papal all but in name. There are, indeed, many pious, evangelical men still within her pale; and the echoes of the Reformation have not yet wholly died away in her sanctuaries. But the spirit that animates her, the impulses which guide her, the doctrines and ceremonies which she best loves, bear throughout the unmistakable features of Romanism. Shocked by the introduction of dogmas and rites, wearing the abhorred livery of Antichrist, Gospel Truth, and vital Faith, and Scriptural Piety, are forsaking her altars, saying, "Let us depart; this is not our rest; it is polluted." It is true, that she now manifests much alarm and exasperation at the bold encroachments of the Papacy, and is rousing herself to resist its endeavors to get possession of her island-throne. But there is no opposition to the principles of Romanism involved in the struggle. It is simply a contest between two kindred Hierarchies, the one seeking to extrude or absorb the other. It is

the Mother striving to unseat the Daughter. The sole question at issue is, whether Pius IX. or Victoria I. shall be Pope of England. The Pontiff of the seven-hilled City longs to wrest the crosier from the Pontiff of Buckingham Palace; and the latter, like a true woman, has no intention of resigning her power. Here is the whole pith of the controversy. The bishops and clergy of the English Church, while they are straining every nerve to preserve her from the clutches of Rome, have no wish to purify her from the tenets of Rome. They are willing enough to trade in Popish wares, only they prefer to do it on their own account.

To such a state of lamentable depravation has one of the fairest jewels of Protestant Christendom been brought by the deteriorating presence of infant baptism. This has been "the dead fly in the ointment," that has sullied her purity, and tainted her fragrance. This it is which, breaking down the fence between her and the world, and letting in upon her all its ungodliness, has filled her once green and nourishing pastures with goats instead of sheep, with wolves instead of shep-

herds. This it is, which has changed her wholesome teachings into soul-destroying errors, transformed her worship into a beggarly imitation of Popish vanities, and reduced her whole Christianity to the mere observance of forms and sacraments. Such a church may continue to be Protestant in name; but, in essence, it is completely Romanized.

An example of the workings of infant baptism in a direction different, indeed, but equally mischievous, may be seen in the theological history of Germany. Luther rolled off from the great truths of the Gospel the mass of perversions with which ages of Papal darkness had overlaid them. He brought out into clear light, and firmly established the cardinal doctrines of Atonement, of Justification by Faith, of Sanctification by the Spirit. He reformed much, but not enough to render the Reformation secure. And it is even a question whether he did more good by what he took away, or more evil by what he allowed to remain. In his ecclesiastical system, he left infant baptism, and infant membership; thus opening the church to the world, and uniting it with the State. He either did not perceive

their unscriptural character, or deemed them comparatively harmless. Devoting his whole strength to clearing the rubbish from great principles, he judged it of little importance to remove the corruptions of an outward rite. But in this his wisdom resembles that of an architect, who should lay a broad and deep foundation, and erect upon it a massive and lofty structure; while, at the same time, he leaves unnoticed a small stream flowing silently beneath it, that must inevitably sap the very ground on which it stands. Thus has it been with the work of Luther. The little rill of infant baptism, welling out from its Papal fountain, has slowly undermined the fabric which he reared, and virtually overturned it. For two centuries, indeed, the doctrines which he taught were rigidly maintained. But they were held merely as a dead letter—a theological creed, for which men would buckle on the armor of controversy, but which had no place in their hearts, and no influence over their lives. This could not last. There came, at length, a change over the public mind; a breaking away from old paths of thought, and a reckless pushing into new ones. The Church

was ill prepared for the crisis. She was thoroughly secularized. The world reveled and rioted in her bosom. The great majority of her members were unconverted. Even her pastors and theological professors were, in most instances, entirely destitute of any experimental acquaintance with the power of Christianity. Such could have no inward witness of the truth of the Gospel, and no illumination of the Spirit, to guide them in their inquiries. Hence, led by unsanctified reason, and a sceptical philosophy, they plunged into the wildest and most dangerous speculations. Nothing was regarded by them as proved. Their daring criticism strove to rend and dislocate the Bible; to show that large portions of it were mere forgeries; that the idea of its divine inspiration was but an enthusiastic dream; and that the entire histories of our Lord and of His Apostles were only pious myths. And this state of things has continued, until the Church of Luther—the eldest daughter of the Reformation—has now, to a great extent, become a church of baptized unbelievers, crowded, in all her departments, with men who, while partaking her ordinances, and

filling her offices, laugh her doctrines to scorn, and assail the authority of the very Scriptures from which they preach. Here and there, it is true, one of her sons may be seen struggling to oppose the rushing tide of infidelity, and lifting up his voice amid the Babel-clamor of rationalistic sects. But its tones are feeble and uncertain; he himself is not free from infection; and, in spite of his weak resistance, the pestilence strides on.

As these sceptical views are thus embraced and advocated by the appointed expounders of Christianity, it might well be expected that they would obtain wide currency among the people themselves. And such is the fact. In Germany, all belong to the church, having been baptized into it in their infancy, and afterwards confirmed in their membership, when old enough to pronounce the Creed, and recite the Catechism. In this vast and promiscuous mass, some few may be found who manifest vital religion, appearing, among the multitude of the ungodly, like solitary travellers, walking amidst huge catacombs of the dead. With the exception of these, the entire body of German Protestants may be distributed into two

grand classes—formalists and rationalists. The first profess a profound veneration for Lutheranism, as the religion of their fathers and of their fatherland. They cling, with superstitious tenacity, to its symbols and formularies, and display a bigoted attachment to its ritual observances. This, with an occasional attendance at public worship, and a participation in the Lord's supper once or twice in their lives, comprises the whole of their Christianity. The other class, though still retaining their connection with the church, do not pretend even to a speculative belief in the truth of the Gospel. They are infidels of every type and color, from the neologist who denies the divine authority of Revelation, to the pantheist who, by deifying Nature, would annihilate God. This, unhappily, is now the popular class in Germany.

From these causes the most disastrous results have followed. Real piety is well nigh extinct. Worldliness, scepticism, and contempt for all sacred things, everywhere predominate. The people flock to demoralizing and infidel lectures, while the temples of God are deserted, and the Sabbath is turned into a carni-

val. The Lutheran Church, once so living and vigorous, is now a putrefying carcass, sending out poisonous exhalations over her own and other lands. This even her own writers admit. Tholuck,—who, though an eminently spiritual man, is yet a strong advocate for the ecclesiastical system, of which he is so distinguished an ornament, and who, therefore, cannot be suspected of painting it in too dark a hue,—has given us the following graphic description of its present state and character. “A huge corpse—stiff, cold, and livid. What in many of its parts appears like life, is but the life of the corruption itself, by which those parts are dissolving. Only here and there, among its dying members, is there a living one, that with difficulty averts death from itself, or seeks to infuse fresh life into the dead portions around it.”¹

¹“Einen grossen Leichnam—starr, kalt und bleich; was in vielen seiner Glieder als Leben erscheint, es ist das Leben der Verwesung selbst, das seine Glieder auflöst; nur mitten unter sterbenden Gliedern noch hie und da ein lebendiges, das mit Mühe den Tod von sich abwehrt, oder Lebensfrische in die erstorbenen Theile um sich her zu verbreiten sucht.”

Tholuck, Predigten, Band I. s. 25, Hamburg, 1843.

And what has brought the Protestant Christianity of Germany into such a deplorable condition? Infant baptism. This, by throwing down the barrier with which Christ has environed his church, admitting into her enclosure the unregenerate and profane, and even installing them in her seats of instruction, has produced all these direful evils. Will it be said, that in the present depraved state of humanity, communities might easily be pervaded by an irreligious and infidel spirit, even if infant baptism had never existed? We grant it. But then the destructive element would be without the church—not, as in this case, within it. However high the tide of ungodliness may rise, all is safe while the church preserves the model ordained by its Divine Founder. Planted on the Rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, it presents an embankment to the swelling waves, which breaks their force, and rolls them harmless back. In a pure church there dwells a recuperative power, that can renovate the most degenerate lands. Living and spiritual—in the world, yet distinct from the world—it acts as a correcting and restoring

agent, reproofing iniquity, confounding unbelief, and holding forth the word of life to a reckless and profligate generation. But if its own light become darkness, how great is that darkness! When the church itself engenders the disease, when its own bosom is the fountain which sends out the contagion—then the last hope disappears. Such a church cannot be reformed. It must be taken down, and give place to one built on a scriptural foundation, or the land which its presence blights, must sink, beyond recovery, into the gulf of corruption.

It may, perhaps, be affirmed, that the moral leprosy with which Lutheranism is infected, has arisen, not from infant baptism, but from certain doctrinal errors in her creed. To this Geneva gives the answer, by showing that even the most rigid orthodoxy cannot long remain pure, in connection with a practice which amalgamates the church and the world. Calvin, still more than Luther, founded his system deeply and broadly on the fundamental verities of the Gospel. But, like Luther, he left the initiatory ordinance unreformed, and thus mingled together the heterogeneous mate-

rials of regenerate and unregenerate. By this single oversight, the city where he taught, and which, illuminated by his doctrine, was once a blazing centre of light—a spiritual Pharos, cheering and guiding the faithful in all lands—has been covered with the black night of Socinianism; her radiance quenched; her voices of truth hushed; and the very pulpit in which her adored reformer preached, polluted by lips that deny the divinity of the Son of God, and the renewing agency of His Spirit. And it is a remarkable fact, and one which bears strongly on the present discussion, that the only bright spot which now shines amid her darkness, was not kindled by any successor of Calvin, but by a member of that body of Christians, whose prominent peculiarity is a rejection of the baptismal dogma which Calvin inculcated. It was through the instrumentality of Robert Haldane, a Baptist from Scotland, that D'Aubigné and his coadjutors were brought to the knowledge of the truth, and incited to the holy labor of proclaiming an uncorrupted Gospel. Thus the solitary fire that burns in Geneva was lighted by a Baptist

hand ; and even this infant baptism will speedily extinguish, if it be not itself destroyed.

But a still more striking instance of the pernicious effects of this custom, is furnished by the history of our own country. Never had infant baptism a fairer field, in which to prove whether there be any good in it, than among the Puritan churches of New England. The early founders of these churches had cast off the fetters of a tyrannical Hierarchy in the old world ; and although they were not entirely purified from the mischievous notion of the connection of religion with civil government, yet they brought with them to their new home views respecting the spiritual nature of Christian communities, and the simplicity of Christian worship, much more correct than those which were generally entertained in that age. They were men profoundly read in the Scriptures, of great faith and zeal, and of exemplary holiness. Since the days of the Apostles, the world has never seen a band of Christians more pure-minded, more self-denied, more conversant with heavenly things. Their situation, too, removed them far from the corrupting contact of other less evangelical societies.

They were alone in the wilderness, with themselves, their offspring, and their God. Surely then, if infant baptism could ever “cease to do evil, and learn to do well,” it would have been here. Let us, then, trace its workings in this secluded position.

The original colonists of New England held that the visible church of Christ consisted of professed believers and their infant seed; that the latter being born in the church, had a right to baptism; and that, from their relation to the church, they were subject to its watch and discipline. This relation, however, was regarded as a modified one, not entitling the baptized child to the full privileges of membership, and to a participation in the Lord’s supper, until he should give evidence of genuine conversion. The anomalous state in which their offspring were thus placed—neither in the church nor out of it—greatly troubled these excellent men, as it ever has and ever will all who hold such unscriptural notions. In process of time, the children of the first settlers grew up, and became themselves heads of families. Many of these still remained unregenerate. It was, therefore, a

very nice and perplexing matter to determine the true position, with respect to the church, of those who, having been baptized in infancy, did not manifest repentance and faith on their arrival at adult years. Equally difficult was it to settle the point whether the children of such ought to be baptized. These questions occasioned much solicitude, and called forth not a little discussion, throughout the colonies. The diversity of opinion, and consequent agitation, at length became so great, that, by the request of the magistrates of Connecticut, the controverted subjects were laid before an assembly of ministers convened at Boston, June 4, 1657. After deliberating fifteen days, they gave the following decision: "That it is the duty of infants who confederate in their parents, when grown up to years of discretion, though not yet fit for the Lord's supper, to own the covenant which they made with their parents, by entering into it in their own persons. And it is the duty of the church to call upon them for the performance thereof; and if, being called upon, they shall refuse the performance of this great duty, or otherwise continue scandalous, they are liable to be cen-

sured for the same by the church. And in case they understand the grounds of religion, and are not scandalous, and solemnly own the covenant in their own persons, wherein they give up both themselves and their children unto the Lord, and desire baptism for them, we see not sufficient cause to deny baptism unto their children.”¹

This decision was not received with entire unanimity. Many looked upon it as an innovation, calculated to lead to very evil consequences. The disputes and contentions respecting it grew at last to be so violent, that a General Synod was deemed necessary, in order to secure peace and uniformity of practice in the churches. Such a body, called by the order of the General Court, met at Boston, in the year 1662. In due time, the fruits of their wisdom appeared in the shape of the following Propositions.

1. “They that, according to Scripture, are members of the visible church are the subjects of baptism.

2. The members of the visible church, according to Scripture, are confederate believers,

¹ Mather's *Magnalia*, Book V. p. 63.

in particular churches, and their infant seed, that is, children in their minority, whose next parents, one or both, are in covenant.

3. The infant seed of confederate visible believers are members of the same church with their parents, and when grown up are personally under the watch, discipline and government of that church.

4. These adult persons are not therefore to be admitted to full communion, merely because they are, and continue to be members, without such further qualifications as the word of God requireth thereto.

5. Church members who were admitted in minority, understanding the doctrine of faith, and publicly professing their assent thereto, not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the covenant before the church, wherein they give up themselves and their children to the Lord, and subject themselves to the government of Christ in the church, their children are to be baptized.”¹

These propositions having been submitted to the General Court, an order was passed by it, October 8, 1662, commending them to all

¹ Mather's Magnalia, Book V. p. 64.

the churches in the jurisdiction.¹ Thus backed by the civil authority, the decision of the Synod was soon generally acquiesced in by the New England churches.

In this manner arose the celebrated "Half-Way Covenant," according to which, persons making no profession of a change of heart, if they only exhibited a fair outward morality, were permitted and required, on the ground of their baptism in infancy, to appear before the church, recognize their connection with it, acknowledge their covenant obligations, and bring their children to baptism. Thus was the door opened to let the world into the church. Thus, within about forty years after the landing of the Pilgrims, and while the patriarchs of the May-Flower were scarcely dead, the original strictness of their discipline was so far changed as to admit an arrangement, which virtually effaces the separating line between the holy and the unholy, between the conscious subjects of renewing grace, and the votaries of earthliness and sin. And this rapid deterioration was caused by infant baptism. Had it not been for its existence and influ-

¹ Mather's *Magnalia*, Book V. p. 64.

ence, the offspring of believers, while unregenerate, would have been viewed as belonging, where they actually do belong, to "them that are without;" as sustaining no relation to the church different from that of other impenitent persons; and as deriving from their religious parentage only the privilege—a precious one indeed—of being the special objects of Christian solicitude, instruction, and prayer. But as such children were supposed, in consequence of their baptism, to hold some undefined and impalpable place in the church, the inconsistency of so regarding them, and yet practically treating them as in the world, greatly disturbed these Puritan Fathers, as it has their descendants ever since. Hence they devised a plan by which baptized adults, who were still unconverted, might be brought away from the court of the Gentiles, and be made, at least, to confess themselves proselytes of the gate. Another reason which led them to this course, was the erroneous idea which they entertained—an idea growing out of infant baptism—that it was the particular appointment of God to perpetuate his kingdom on earth by hereditary descent. When, therefore, they saw their

children arriving at maturity, and becoming themselves parents, without possessing that spiritual character which would fit them to take their place at the Lord's table, they became greatly alarmed for the continuance of religion in future times.¹ To guard against this danger, they resolved that their sons and daughters, if not prepared to make a full profession, should, at any rate, make half of one, and so far own the covenant as to bring their infants within it; in this manner serving as a sort of intermediate conductors to convey the faith of the grand parents to the grand children, and thus securing the transmission of grace to posterity.

The corrupt principle contained in this measure, and the evils which resulted from it, cannot be described more forcibly than they have been by the eloquent Dr. Wisner, who, as a Pedobaptist, cannot be supposed to have overdrawn the picture. "Persons were permitted to come and make, in the most solemn circumstances, the most solemn of all professions, when they did not regard themselves, and were not regarded by others, as having at all in

¹ Mather's *Magnalia*, Book V. p. 63.

heart given themselves away to God, and trusted in Christ, and yielded themselves up to be the temples of the Holy Ghost. And as to the promises which were annexed, of educating children in the fear of the Lord, and submitting to the discipline of the church, on the one hand, and of watchful care on the other, they too soon came to be alike disregarded, both by those who exacted and by those who made them. Parents did not, and soon were not expected, to fulfill their engagements, in form so solemn and significant; and churches did not, and soon were not expected to fulfill theirs. Thus the most solemn and impressive acts of religion came to be regarded as unmeaning ceremonies; the form only to be thought important, while the substance was overlooked, and rapidly passing away.”¹

It was not to be expected that the evil would stop here. The progress of degeneracy is ever more decided and rapid, the longer it continues. It is like the letting out of imprisoned waters, which rush along with a force and volume constantly increasing. Accordingly, the same writer thus graphically records the

¹ Wisner's History of the Old South Church.

consequences to which it soon led. “And now another and still more fatal step was taken in this downward course. Why should such a difference be made between the two Christian sacraments, which reason infers from the nature of the case, and the Scriptures clearly determine, require precisely the same qualifications? If persons were qualified to make, in order to come to one ordinance, the very same profession, both in meaning and in terms, required to come to the other, why should they be excluded from that other? The practical result, every one sees, would be, that if the innovation already made were not abandoned, another would speedily be introduced. And such was the fact. Correct moral deportment, with a profession of correct doctrinal opinions, and a desire for regeneration, came to be regarded as the only qualification for admission to the communion. This innovation, though not as yet publicly advocated by any, there is conclusive proof had become quite extensive in practice previously to 1679. The churches soon came to consist very considerably, in many places, of unregenerate persons—of those who regarded themselves, and were re-

garded by others, as unregenerate. Of all these things the consequence was, that within thirty years after the commencement of the eighteenth century, a large portion of the clergy, through the country, were either only speculatively correct, or to some extent actually erroneous in their religious opinions, maintaining regularly the forms of religion, but in some instances having well nigh lost, and in others, it is to be feared, having never felt, its power.”¹

To such a state had the Puritan churches of New England been brought by infant baptism, within a single century. Silently but surely it had done its work, sapping successively the safeguards of truth and purity, until by the abandonment of the principle, that none but “living stones” should be incorporated into the house of God, the last defence gave way, and a torrent of corruption flowed in. The world emptied itself into the church. There was, in fact, no longer any world. It was all church. Everywhere men avowedly unconverted belonged to her communion, presided over her interests, served at her altars. With

¹ Wisner's History, etc.

a membership and ministry thus alike carnal, it was not to be supposed that she would retain, for any length of time, even a theoretical belief in the grand teachings of revelation. These, however, were not at once repudiated. The forms of faith, which have become fixed in a community, do not suddenly pass away. Truth leaves the heart and the lips long before it leaves the creed. For a considerable period, therefore, a dead, leaden orthodoxy hung over New England, hiding, like a shroud, the rottenness beneath. But this could not continue. An incipient change began to be perceived. The distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel were not, indeed, denounced and opposed. They were passed over. While still keeping their place in Confessions and Articles, they were quietly dismissed from the Pulpit, to make room for moral essays, and panegyrics on the beauty of natural virtue. The downward process, having gone thus far, must go farther. Men are never satisfied with what is merely negative. They demand the positive; and when once they have discarded positive truth, their next step is to embrace positive error. Hence, we find that as early as the

middle of the last century, opinions involving a denial of the proper divinity of Christ, the depravity of human nature, the need of atonement, and the work of the Spirit in regeneration, were extensively adopted in Massachusetts. Advocated at first by some prominent ministers of Boston, they spread for fifty years through the country, pervading the graceless clergy and the still more graceless laity ; until, the season of incubation having expired, the monstrous egg broke at last, and the great Unitarian Apostacy stood revealed in all its hideousness.

Now, we affirm that this most disastrous consummation was the direct result of infant baptism. It was the product of a series of agencies of which infant baptism was the beginning and author. Its proximate cause is doubtless to be found in the practices growing out of the half way Covenant. But what originated the half way Covenant? Would this strange device have ever seen the light, had it not been for the illicit union of the church with infant baptism? Do not all the writers of that period expressly declare, that its sole purpose was to induce irreligious parents, who

had been baptized in infancy, to make a formal recognition of the covenant, so that their children might be brought to the font, and thus infant baptism be perpetuated? Without infant baptism, such a measure would never have been dreamed of, nor could the slightest pretence have been set up for its adoption. Infant baptism, then, we say again, is the original and real parent of New England Unitarianism.

And as in Geneva, so here, the first check given to the rampant heresy came from those who had never acknowledged Pedobaptism. When the banner of an insulted Christ lay soiled and trampled in the dust, the venerated Stillman and Baldwin caught it up, and waving it abroad in the breeze, sent the war-cry of Immanuel echoing over all the hills and vallies of New England; until the few, "faithful found among the faithless," had time to rally and make head against the overwhelming defection. A Pedobaptist historian very candidly informs us, that "at the beginning of the present century, all the Congregational churches in Boston, with a single exception, had renounced the faith of the Puritans. The

Old South still stood upon the platform of the fathers, though her pastor was a semi-Arian. But when the enemy came in like a flood, the Lord lifted up a standard against him. In the year 1803, the Baptist churches in the city were visited with a precious revival, in which the Old South shared to some extent."¹ A few of the members of this Church, occasionally worshipping with the Baptists, became revived, and established a prayer meeting among themselves; from which a renovating movement commenced, that has been the origin of all the Orthodox Congregational Churches with which the City of the Pilgrims is now blessed. Thus when infant baptism had put out the fire on all its own altars, with the exception of one solitary shrine, and had caused it even there to burn dim and low; the flame was kindled again from altars which this unscriptural rite had never been suffered to profane. And while, amid the Egyptian darkness that settled down over the Pedobaptists in Boston, the Baptists, in their Goshen at the North End,² thus walked in

¹ Moore's Boston Revivals, p. 28.

² The part of the city in which the Baptist churches were located.

unclouded light, and showed themselves valiant for the truth ; so, throughout the land, feeble and scattered as they were, they stood firm by the cause of their Master. Though thousands around were casting off the authority of Jesus, not a man of them wavered in his allegiance. From all their places of worship the ensign of the cross streamed out undepressed and untarnished ; and from all their pulpits the Godhead of Christ, and the sovereign efficacy of His blood, were distinctly and earnestly proclaimed. To the memory of these brave-hearted men justice may never be done in this world. But we doubt not, that in the great day of decision, when all events and instrumentalities shall be placed in their true light, it will appear that to the Baptists of Massachusetts belongs the honor of having been the first to arrest the overflowing scourge ; that they were the Abdiels who remained faithful in the midst of revolted multitudes ; that it was they, who, when all seemed lost, threw themselves, single-handed, into the van of the battle, and held the field against fearful odds, until, behind their sheltering front, the broken ranks of Orthodoxy were formed anew. Peace

to the ashes of these Christian heroes ! May their names and their deeds be precious to New England, as they are already blessed in heaven !

The great facts, which have been thus briefly reviewed, are full of instruction. They teach us, with the truth and certainty of history, that infant baptism, whenever operating without restraint, will inevitably corrupt the communities that uphold it. Either, by introducing the dogma of baptismal regeneration, and attributing saving virtue to outward forms, it will develop itself into essential Romanism ; or, by admitting the unregenerate into the church, and joining together what God has put asunder, it will prepare the way for a dead and soulless Faith, soon to be quickened into a living Infidelity. Whichever direction it takes, and in whatever shape its influence is displayed, it is "evil, only evil, and that continually." We cannot but regard it as the most pernicious heresy which has ever sullied the primitive simplicity of the Gospel. We are constrained to believe, that, directly or indirectly, it has done more than all other corruptions combined, to pollute Christianity, to

enfeeble her power, and to keep back the hour of her final triumph. It is, in fact, the origin of most of these corruptions,—the source from which they have sprung, and by which they are constantly fed. In a word, we look upon it as the most dangerous element that now exists in the Church. And it is all the more dangerous from the slow and insidious manner in which it accomplishes its results. Were it to stand out in open day, with its real nature and tendencies fully revealed, the whole host of God's people would rise up to banish it from the earth. But it acts silently and covertly, reaching its ends by steps so circuitous, and by a progress so imperceptible, that the consequences are not seen till the catastrophe comes; and even then they are referred, not to the primal cause, but to some one of the intermediate agencies which it has set in motion.

To the views here expressed it may be objected, that there are several denominations of Christians in this country, who practice infant baptism, and yet maintain evangelical sentiments, and exhibit an evangelical spirit. This is cheerfully admitted. Nevertheless, it does

not shake our confidence in the soundness of the position we have taken. In these denominations, infant baptism is not allowed its free and natural development. It is restricted and hemmed in by a counteracting power. And this power goes out from the Baptist Churches. While claiming no superiority over their evangelical sisters, in general correctness of doctrine, or purity of Christian character; they do claim—and Scripture sustains the claim—that, on the particular subject of baptism, they alone hold the truth; and what they firmly believe, they fearlessly declare. By their constantly increasing numbers; by their almost universal diffusion; by the scriptural and even self-evident nature of their principles,—a wide public opinion has been created unfavorable to infant baptism. This prevailing sentiment acts not on Baptists alone; nor on those only who are immediately under their influence. It affects all classes. It penetrates even the guarded inclosure of Pedobaptist churches, producing an unconfessed, but ever active distrust of an institution, to which the Bible lends no sanction. This is shown by the sad complainings which

are uttered in certain quarters, respecting the diminution in the number of baptized children, and the difficulty of persuading parents to comply with a custom, for which they can find neither precept nor example in the Word of God. In some sections, indeed, the practice seems rapidly falling in desuetude. And were ministers and theological teachers to cease striving to uphold, by their bare authority, a rite which they never have proved, and never can prove, to be of divine appointment, the masses would soon lay it aside altogether.

Thus circumscribed and impeded, infant baptism does not display its full character and tendency. Born in the twilight of superstition, it puts forth all its energies for evil only when surrounded by its native element. Under the noon-day of truth which Baptists are now pouring upon it, its eyes are dazzled; it becomes torpid; its huge limbs shrivel up; it assumes the shrunken form of a mere act of "symbolic dedication;" even some of its friends begin to treat it as a small affair, and almost to ignore it.

Yet, even in this shorn and crippled state, it

is neither dead nor harmless. It must, under any circumstances, operate as a fatal injury, or a gross injustice, to those on whom it is administered. If, as they grow up, it lead them, as it naturally may, to suppose themselves in a peculiar relation to God, bearing the seal of His covenant, and set apart as His special property; it will inevitably render them secure in their impenitence, under the persuasion that by virtue of their baptism they shall certainly obtain grace at last; and thus it will prove the direct means of their everlasting destruction. Or if, in spite of this delusive impression, the divine Spirit should reach their hearts, convince them of their lost condition, and bring them to Christ; then it will act as an unrighteous bond to withhold them from duty. A ceremony, in which they bore no conscious share; vows, made by others in their name, without their consent or knowledge—will be urged as arguments to prevent them from obeying the plain command of the Saviour, first to believe, and then to be baptized. In both these cases, infant baptism is a flagrant wrong. In the one, it is a snare to the soul; in the other, a trap to the conscience.

But this is not the only evil which it is producing, at the present day, among the Pedo-baptist communities of our own land. In some directions, its old Popish leaven is busily working. Already, through its operation, a large portion of the Episcopal denomination has become essentially Romanized, both in spirit and in practice. And in certain sections of the Presbyterian body, views are advanced with respect to its efficacy, and the moral position of its subjects, which involve the very germ of Popery. No—infant baptism has not lost its venom under the bright sun of the nineteenth century, and in the free air of republican America. And if it does not, at last, render this country Papal or infidel, it will be owing, under God, to the resistance it meets with from the Baptist churches. Let their light be withdrawn, and a few generations would see our now broad and happy land covered with spiritual darkness, rotting beneath the stagnant waters of Formalism, or swept by the wild waves of a God-denying Liberalism.

One more great truth has been evolved by our inquiries. It is, that when Christian bodies,

retaining infant baptism, become corrupt, they have no inherent power to throw off the contaminating influence, and spring forth into new life. If a church, built on the apostolical basis of admitting to membership only the avowedly regenerate, should in process of time be debased by the intrusion of secular ingredients, it has the element of restoration within itself. The remedy lies in a recurrence to its own first principles; in the enforcement of that fundamental law of its constitution, which requires, that God's spiritual house should be composed of spiritual materials alone. But it is widely different with a Pedobaptist church. It can derive no help from a resort to its first principles. These first principles have done all the mischief. The regarding it as an elementary rule, that the church of Christ consists of believers and their unconverted seed, thus mingling together the "lively stones" of the sanctuary, and "the wood, hay, and stubble" of the world—has been the very well-spring of the corruption which overspreads it. How, then, can it put away this corruption, while its source remains? Such a result is clearly impossible. It may manifest occasional

amendment. There may be in its history intervals of revival and of comparative purity. But they will be partial and evanescent. The same prolific fountain will continue to send out its streams to deluge and pollute it anew. For such a church there is no alternative but to renounce its first principles, and adopt the platform of the Bible, or sink, at length, in irreclaimable degeneracy. The history of the world does not furnish an instance of a Pedobaptist church, remaining such, that has radically and permanently reformed itself. The Church of England has not done it, and never can do it. She must cease her unholy alliance with the State; she must cease to admit to her communion the worldly and the profane; in other words, she must cease to be Pedobaptist—cease to be herself—and be transmuted into a new, spiritual church, modeled according to the pattern of the Gospel—before the Spirit of Holiness will revisit her tabernacles. The Church of Germany has not done it, and never can do it. All the learning, and piety, and zeal of the noble band of evangelical men, that are now rising up in her midst, will never dispel the gangrene from her vitals, unless the

cause be removed, by the removal of infant baptism, and its attendant evils. There may be, in particular spots, signs of spasmodic life; and here and there individuals may be found who appear truly awake to the concerns of eternity. But over the great body of her communion, Death will still reign in all the intensity of its power. It is not from a church so sunk in the mire of secularity, that the redemption of Germany is to come. The day of that redemption is indeed dawning; but its beams emanate not from the lecture-rooms of the universities, nor from the pulpits of endowed cathedrals. It is from the little companies of baptized believers, gathered by Oncken, and Köbner, and Lehmann, that there goes forth over the land of Luther and Melancthon, the morning light of a second-Reformation; a Reformation which shall be complete, as the first was partial, and which shall overthrow the citadel of darkness, as that did its outworks. So it has been, and so it will be ever. The records of every century since infant baptism arose, corroborate the statement, that communities, plunged by it into moral decay, never recover by any impulse

from within. The energy, which shall fully reanimate them, must come from without; and even then the result can be perfectly secured, only by taking their whole frame-work in pieces, and reconstructing it on a scriptural basis.

For evangelical Pedobaptists, of whatever name, we cherish the most fraternal feelings. We salute them as brethren in Christ. We know them to be devoted, heart and soul, to the same holy Cause, in which we humbly toil. We believe that they desire, with a sincerity and earnestness unsurpassed by our own, the abolition of every form of superstition and unbelief, and the spread of a pure Gospel throughout the earth. But, at the same time, we are solemnly convinced, that so long as they cling to infant baptism, they can never see these ends entirely accomplished. How can they hope to demolish Romanism, while they strive to perpetuate, in their own organizations, the very key-stone of its whole system; the chief instrument which brought it into being, and which will inevitably build it up again, the same in substance, if not in name? Or how can they look for ultimate

triumph in the conflict with infidelity, if they cherish among themselves a traitor, that, fast as they can drive one army from the field, will bring a fresh one into it? This is but the labor of Sisyphus repeated. The stone of victory, rolled almost to the mountain-top, will rebound and fall back into the abyss. Such efforts, to be successful, must begin at the foundation. The axe must be laid at the root. Infant Baptism—that old Upas tree, which, with its death-distilling branches, Ungodly Church-Membership, State-Religions, Prelacy, Popery, and Scepticism, has for fourteen centuries shaded and blasted the world—must come down, before the pure light of Heaven, and the sweet breath of Life, can circulate freely over the expanse of our darkened and diseased humanity.

How momentous is the part assigned to those who hold the ordinances of Christ as He delivered them! We cannot doubt that it is the purpose of God to introduce, through their instrumentality, that general return to primitive order, which is to herald the crowning conquests of the Gospel. From the time of the first departure from apostolical purity,

even down through all the darkest eras of the subsequent Apostacy, there has always been a succession of men, who, abjuring all communion with Rome, have, under different names, and in different countries, kept the word and the testimony of Jesus. And the rapid growth, in our own day, of the true descendants of these ancient witnesses, their advanced position, their disciplined array, their increasing influence and resources, furnish significant indications, that their great work is soon to be achieved. What a solemn mission is theirs! How do the coming destinies of the church and of the world hang upon it! Their principles must prevail, or tradition, imposture, and infidelity will still hold the field. Their banner must wave from every tower and battlement of Zion, or final victory can never be hers. May "the Captain of Salvation" give them grace to fulfill the trust committed to their hands.

CHAPTER V.

CERTAIN EXTINCTION OF INFANT BAPTISM.

It is true, that from the fifth century until now, this pernicious error has held sway over the greater part of those who have borne the Christian name; bringing with it all the corruptions of doctrine and of discipline which inevitably follow in its train. It is also true, that, though its power has been checked, and its hold on the public mind weakened, it is still widely prevalent; substituting, throughout whole nations, a mere nominal Christianity for the pure and life-living Gospel; propping up time-worn abuses; and retarding the moral emancipation of the world. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that the time is hastening on, when, strongly intrenched as it now is in the superstitious veneration of the masses, and upheld, from interested motives, by lordly priests and bloated hierarchies, it shall be ut-

terly and forever extirpated. The Scriptures teem with the delightful announcement, that a day shall yet dawn on the earth, when Christianity shall not only universally prevail, but shall be wholly freed from the numerous perversions by which its energies have been impaired, and its beauty disfigured. In that predicted period, "the Man of Sin" shall be destroyed, and every trace and relic of his influence be swept away. The doctrines of the Gospel will shine out in their primal lustre, and its ordinances again be restored to apostolical purity and simplicity. Christ "shall be King over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord, and His name one."¹ In other words, "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," shall be acknowledged and received by all Christians: and there shall be a universal agreement with respect both to the inward essence and the outward institutions of the Gospel. In this glorious reign of truth and holiness—the "latter day," which inspiration promises, and for which every pious heart must fervently long—infant baptism will no

¹ Zech. xiv. 9.

more be practiced, but will vanish and be forgotten, as the shadows of the morning twilight melt before the risen sun. This I most confidently believe. As firmly as I believe that the Gospel shall yet subdue the world, so firmly do I believe that, in the consummation of its triumphs, infant baptism, with every other antichristian custom, will be driven out of the church, and be cast into the same bottomless pit with the Beast and the false prophet. The reasons on which my belief is founded, are partially implied in the statements above made. It may be desirable however, that I should adduce them more particularly, and at greater length.

I believe this, because, in the time referred to, churches will be formed on the same model with those in the days of the Apostles. That this will be the case, is clearly manifest from the teachings of prophecy. "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin; and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called, The City of Righteous-

ness.”¹ “Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me.”² “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament.”³ Now the apostolical churches contained only baptized believers, or such persons, and such alone, as had by baptism made a public profession of their faith. The church at Jerusalem—the first Christian Church that was instituted—consisted of the Apostles and others who had been converted and baptized during the ministry of our Lord; and then of those who, on the day of Pentecost and subsequently received the truth, and were added by baptism, to the company of the disciples.⁴ The next Christian Church was at Samaria; and this was composed of men and women, who were baptized on believing the Gospel preached by

¹ Isa i. 25, 26² Jer. xxx. 18, 20.³ Rev. xi. 19.⁴ Acts ii. 41: iv. 4.

Philip.¹ The Church at Corinth consisted of those who, having heard the word from the lips of Paul, believed and were baptized.² Of similar converts were the Churches at Rome, Philippi, and Colosse composed. In all the New Testament, not a single instance of infant baptism nor of infant membership is recorded, or even intimated. Nor is there the slightest hint that any were ever received into churches, who had not been baptized on a personal profession of their faith. If therefore, such was the apostolical constitution of the Church; and if, in the latter day, this constitution is to be restored; it follows that infant baptism will then be no more practiced.

I believe this, because the ordinances of the Gospel will then be administered as they were originally appointed, free from all the present intermixtures of superstition and corruption. Such I consider to be the meaning of that vision of the Apocalypse—*the opening of the temple of God in Heaven*⁴—seen by St. John immediately after the sounding of the seventh trumpet. I interpret this as a symbolical an-

¹ Acts viii. 12.

² Acts xviii. 8.

³ Rev. xi. 19: xiv. 5.

nouncement of the restoration of the worship, doctrines, discipline, and ordinances of the Gospel to their free use, and to their primitive purity. In the coming era of scriptural light and knowledge, “the tabernacle of the testimony”—the pure truth of God—so long shut up by ecclesiastical tyranny, or hidden behind the veil of perversions and false glosses, will be thrown wide open, revealing its treasures to every eye, and filling every mind with its heavenly radiance. In this broad and bright illumination, every form of error will shrink away, and be annihilated. The teachings of the Gospel will be rightly understood, and cordially embraced. The Lord’s supper will be administered, clear of all the corruptions and ceremonies, introduced into it by Papists, and retained by Protestants. In like manner, the ordinance of baptism will be purified and brought back to the scriptural model. In the first ages of Christianity, it was administered to believers alone, and by immersion only. So will it be in the future age of renovation. Of course, then, infant sprinkling will be practiced no more.

I believe this, because Christ will then be

King over all the earth in a spiritual sense; the one Lord whose commands will be obeyed with great precision and exactness, as they are made known in His Word. Among the commands which He has given, baptism is included; and as he will be acknowledged the one Lord and Head of the Church,—and not the Pope, whose power will then be ended—there will be one Baptism, which will be administered to one class of subjects only, and by immersion only—the one mode which He has ordained in His statutes, and confirmed by his example. Infant sprinkling, therefore, will be practiced no more.

I believe this, because, in the advancing period of Zion's glory, the *name* of Christ, that is, His religion, will be one and the same in every part of the world. In spirit, in doctrine, in form, it will be precisely what it was when it came, all stainless and living, from its Divine Founder. Now it appears various, discordant, even contradictory; owing to the different manner in which it is professed and exhibited. But in the latter day, it will be uniform and harmonious in all its branches, as embraced, felt and manifested by all Christians.

And as baptism is a part of Christ's religion, this also will be observed in a uniform manner by all who bear Christ's name. For since the name of Christ, or the Christian religion in all its parts, will be the same in all who profess it; I, therefore, am firmly persuaded, that baptism will be practiced alike by all, according to its primitive institution; and, consequently, that infant sprinkling will be forever abolished.

I believe this, because, in the latter day, "the watchmen of Zion will see eye to eye."¹ As the appointed teachers of Christianity will be of one mind, with respect both to its doctrines and its duties, and will alike preach the one, and practice the other; so the people, under their ministrations, will be all of the same belief; receiving the truths of the Gospel in the love of them, and submitting to its precepts and institutions, without any difference among themselves, and without any variation from the word of God. There will then no longer be any strife about baptism. All will agree, that its proper subjects are believers, and its right mode immersion. Thus infant

¹ Isa. lii. 8.

sprinkling will no more be contended for ; and Christians will in all things serve the Lord with one consent.¹

Another reason why I firmly believe that infant baptism will hereafter entirely cease, is, because Antichrist will be utterly consumed by the Spirit of Christ's mouth, and with the brightness of his coming.² In other words, Romanism, with all kindred systems of falsehood and impiety, will be annihilated by the pure and powerful preaching of the Gospel, when Christ shall come to take to Himself His power, and reign spiritually in the churches, in a manner more glorious than He has ever yet done. Then all antichristian doctrines and practices will be entirely abolished, even the whole body of antichristian worship. Not a limb of Antichrist shall remain, but all be consumed. Now as I fully believe, and think it has been clearly shown, that infant baptism is a part and pillar of Popery, a limb of Antichrist, a branch of superstition and will-worship, introduced by the Man of Sin,—when he shall be destroyed, this shall be destroyed with him.

¹ Zep. iii. 9.

² 2 Thess. ii. 8.

Nor am I shaken in this belief by the fact, that, in various ages, wise and good men have embraced and practiced infant baptism. It is a part of "the wood, hay, and stubble," laid by them upon the foundation. It is one of those works of theirs—the product of human device and invention—which the bright day of the Gospel shall declare to be a falsehood; and which the fire of the word will try, burn up, and consume, though they themselves shall be saved. And, therefore, being utterly consumed, it shall no more appear in the world.

When the angel, foretold in the Apocalypse, shall descend from heaven with great power, to proclaim the fall of spiritual Babylon, the whole earth shall be lightened with his glory.¹ Before the blazing splendor of truth, that will surround his path, all darkness shall be removed, and all works of darkness be made manifest and cast off—among which infant baptism is one. Then shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.² That is, the knowledge of the word, ways, worship, truths, and ordinances

¹ Rev. xviii. 1, 2.

² Isa. xi. 9.

of God, shall universally prevail; and all ignorance, misconception, or abuse of them be banished forever. The ordinance of baptism will then be disentangled from the mass of traditions which have so long encumbered it, and appear once more in its native lustre. It will be observed in strict accordance with its original mode and design, and every corruption of it be scrupulously rejected. Hence, as infant baptism is such a corruption, it will, in that day, be abhorred and cast away.

Since we are taught in Scripture, that the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper are to continue until the coming of Christ at the end of the world;¹ and since these ordinances have been greatly and very generally corrupted; it is not reasonable to suppose that their Divine Author will allow them always to remain in this deformed and vitiated state; but that in the spiritual reign of Christ—the blissful period that is to usher in His final Advent,—every perversion which has been made of their intent, and every addition or curtailment which has marred their inspired model, will be scattered, like chaff, before the might

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 26.

of the triumphant Gospel. And as in relation to baptism, there must be, on the one side or the other, a mistake with respect both to its subjects and its mode; and as I am thoroughly persuaded that this mistake exists on the side of the Pedobaptists; so I as firmly believe, for the reason given, that it will be removed, and infant sprinkling be no more used.

The time when this happy consummation will take place, is that predicted in the message to the church at Philadelphia,¹ whose state I regard as emblematical of the spiritual reign of Christ in the latter day. In this conclusion I am confirmed by the character given of that church and of its members. It is described as having kept the word of Christ; and this, I conceive, prefigures the conduct of Christians in the millennial age; when not only will the doctrines of the Gospel be purely preached and openly professed, but its ordinances also, baptism and the Lord's supper, which,—especially baptism,—have been sadly corrupted in almost all former periods except the apostolic, will be restored to their pristine purity and glory. Hence it is promised to this church,

¹ Rev. iii. 7-12.

and through it to the churches of that future era which it represents, that because it had truly and faithfully kept the word of Christ's patience, it should be delivered from the hour of temptation which should come upon all the earth. It is also exhorted to hold fast what it had, and to maintain both doctrines and ordinances as they were delivered by Christ and his Apostles, and as it now held them in their primitive simplicity and incorruptness.¹

¹This interpretation of the learned author will not bear the test of sober criticism. The Apostle John was instructed by our Lord to address a message to the church in Philadelphia—a church existing in his own time, and in the region which had been the principal scene of his own labors. In this message, allusion is made to the state and character of the church, and to recent events in its history. Its steadfastness and fidelity are commended; and a promise is given to it of triumph over the Judaical party, by whose factious conduct its peace, in common with that of all the early churches, had been greatly disturbed. Then follows the animating assurance of preservation in the approaching hour of temptation, which should come upon all the world; by which is undoubtedly meant one of those severe and general persecutions which took place under the Roman emperors. Now that there is much in this message instructive and profitable to Christians in all ages, as well as to those to whom it was primarily directed, none will deny. But to

These are the principal reasons why I believe, with a strong and unwavering faith, that the time is coming, and I trust is not far off, when infant baptism, with its numerous progeny of baleful influences and results, will be banished from the earth, no more to pollute the fair face of Christianity, and no more to deceive the souls of men.

In our own times, a great and just alarm is felt at the rapid increase of Popery, and the spread of principles kindred with it, and tending to its propagation. The Beast seems recovering from his deadly wound,¹ and with invigorated energies, is preparing for a last effort

convert it into a prophecy, and make it, in fact, a symbol of one of the grand epochs in the unfolding destinies of the Gospel,—when not the slightest hint of such an application is contained in the message itself,—is a mode of expounding Scripture altogether arbitrary and fanciful. It is unquestionably true, that the universal prevalence of Christianity is the subject of numerous scriptural predictions; and that, in the period of their fulfilment, the doctrines and institutions of the Gospel will be purely held and kept. But it is not true that the state of the Philadelphian Church was designed by the Holy Spirit to be a prophetic emblem of that period.—Ed.

¹ Rev. xiii. 3, 12.

to regain the mastery of the world; while the numberless bands of his auxiliaries and satellites—Baptismal Regeneration, Sacramental Efficacy, Formalism, Mysticism, and Political Intrigue—in diverse array, and with motley banners, are mustering, thick and fast, to the onset. Every thing betokens the coming on of the final struggle between the powers of Light and of Darkness. This combat Protestantism is in no condition to meet successfully. By retaining Infant Baptism, she keeps in her very citadel the chief supporter and prime minister of the foe; insidiously sapping her strength, betraying her defences, spiking her artillery, and waiting but for a fitting moment to lay her, prostrate and helpless, at the feet of her victorious enemy. Down with the traitor! Tear off his disguise, and lay bare beneath it the uniform of the Papacy! Wash his painted face, and read on his brow “the mark of the Beast.” Thus detected and renounced, send him back to the camp of Antichrist, where he belongs. Then, and not till then, may the Protestant host, united under the broad standard of “the truth as it is in Jesus,” formed in Gospel order, and moving on to the

exulting war-cry, "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," hope to scatter the forces of Superstition and Falsehood, and bear the uplifted ensign of Salvation in triumph over the world.

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THE BASIS OF INFANT BAPTISM.

A WORD IN PASSING

TO THOSE WHO HAVE ABANDONED THE CHURCH
OF ROME AND HER TRADITIONS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

REV. C. H. O. COTE, M. D.,

Formerly a Roman Catholic, but afterwards Missionary of the
Grand Ligne Mission, in Canada.



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NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

THE following tract is a translation of a little work, published in the year 1848, by the American Baptist Publication Society, during the lifetime of its author, the late Rev. C. H. O. Cote, M. D., entitled, "*Un mot en passant, a ceux qui ont abandonné l'église Romaine, et ses traditions.*"

Its lamented author, who died in the triumphs of faith, August 4th, 1850, and of whom a brief memoir has recently been published by the same Society, became extensively known, and affectionately endeared to the Baptist denomination in Canada and the United States, during his eight years of faithful and successful labor as a Baptist Missionary, in connection with the Swiss Mission of Grand Ligne, in Canada.

His labors on behalf of the deluded victims of Romish error were so arduous and so constant, as to leave him but little leisure for literary efforts. The few specimens, however, which he has left behind—chiefly in the French language—of his abilities as a writer, prove that he wielded a powerful and vigorous pen. The little work now presented to the English reader has already been very useful in the French language. It has been exten-

sively circulated in the United States, Canada, and Hayti; and a Missionary, speaking of its surprising effects in Hayti, remarked that, "if Dr. Cote had written nothing else, he would not have lived in vain." The work is designed to show that infant baptism rests upon precisely the same foundation as other Romish traditions; and is a powerful appeal to the seceder from Rome, since he has professed to renounce the traditions of that apostate church, to abandon this with the rest. The translator has endeavored to be as literal as the idioms of the two languages would permit. He has studied not elegance, but fidelity. With the exception of a few pages which he has added as an appendix, the reader may be assured that it is not the translator, but Dr. Cote himself, who is addressing him, in his own pointed, impressive, and sententious style.

J. D.

Philadelphia, May, 1853.

A WORD IN PASSING,
TO THOSE WHO HAVE ABANDONED
THE CHURCH OF ROME.

“No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.”—Matthew vi. 24.

“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils.”—1 Cor. x. 21.

“What concord hath Christ with Belial.”—2 Cor. vi. 15.

THIS little treatise is written especially for those who, after having been for a long time in the spiritual darkness and ignorance of the church of Rome, have been awakened by the Spirit of the Lord and the reading of his Holy word; and in obedience to the voice which has been addressed to them, have come out from that church which, “by her TRADITIONS, has made the commandment of God of none effect.” Matt. xv. 6.

I desire to address myself to those who, like the author of this tract, have heard the cry which comes from Heaven, and says, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Rev. xviii. 4. My purpose is to converse with those who have turned their backs upon Rome and her traditions, in order that they may turn towards Jesus and his gospel. It is to their conscience and understanding that I address myself. In all that I shall say, I will keep "to the law and to the testimony," and if I speak not according to this word, I desire to be in no wise regarded.

It is then a settled fact, dear friends in the Lord, that you have left the church of Rome. You have determined to sever all the ties which bound you to the church in which you were born, and in whose false doctrines you were brought up.

The man of the Bible easily understands why you have thus acted. He knows that you have hearkened to the voice which says "Search the scriptures," John v. 39; that you have recognized the Romish church in the picture which the Holy Spirit has drawn, by

the mouth of the apostle Paul, when he says that, "in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and *doctrines of devils*; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron; *forbidding to marry*, and *commanding to abstain from meats* which God hath created." 1 Tim. iv. 1-3. He knows that you have become convinced that the apostle Paul speaks that which is applicable to the present church of Rome, when he says, "they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man." Rom. i. 21-23.

You have also recognized the pope in that other portrait which the apostle draws, when writing to the church at Thessalonica. "THAT MAN OF SIN, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.

The man of the Bible knows that you have

found in the church of Rome all those characteristics which the apostle John attributes to her, in the seventeenth chapter of the Revelation, and that in the following chapter you have found a command to go out from Babylon, "that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

It is, then, an established and admitted fact, that because the Romish church "has made the word of God of none effect by her traditions"—Matt. xv. 6—because she "teaches for doctrines the commandments of men"—v. 9—because she has dared to suppress the second commandment of the decalogue, and has falsified the sacraments of the New Testament, *you have abandoned her*, as adding to the word of God, and taking from it, just as she finds it convenient. You have called to mind also what Jesus has declared at the close of the sacred volume: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out

of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Rev. xxii.—18, 19.

In short, it is because the church of Rome is not based upon the word of God; because she rejects and conceals that word, that you have separated yourselves from her.

Let me now ask you one question. Do you believe that the church of Rome is in reality such as we have just described her to be? that she possesses all the marks and characters of "the man of sin, the son of perdition," of that Antichrist *who teaches the doctrines of devils*,—of "the great whore,"—of the woman "arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls," who has "upon her forehead a name written MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH?" Rev. xvii., 4, 5. If you believe all these things, you have done well to come forth, without longer delay, from a church which you recognize as possessing all the characteristics of the enemy of God. You are then placed upon the solid ground of the

Bible, and all those who love the word of God cannot but rejoice at your noble resolution.

But I have still another question to propose to you. It is this: Do you wish to be consistent with the declarations you have just made? If so, then I beseech you to examine, yet once more, the three passages of scripture which I have placed at the beginning of this treatise. You recognize them to be a portion of the word of God. At the same time, if, as I doubt not, you are sincere in the opinion which you share, in relation to the church of Rome, then she must be regarded by you as Antichrist, as Belial—in a word, as opposed to the word of God. She must be that kingdom which opposeth all that is God, “that man of sin, who exalteth himself above all that is called God,” wishing himself to pass for God.

Now, I ask you, what fellowship can there be between Jesus Christ and Belial? I ask, if we can belong to the church or visible kingdom of Jesus Christ here upon earth, and at the same time belong to a system which is directly contrary to him? I ask if we can drink of the cup of the Lord, and at the same time that of devils? Certainly not, you an-

swer me. It is then a well settled fact with you, that there can be no alliance, no affinity whatsoever between the church of Jesus Christ and that of Antichrist.

If the assertion which has just been made is true—and I believe it with my whole heart—it remains for me to propose yet another question to you : Is it lawful in going out of the church of Rome, for a person to retain any of her FALSE TRADITIONS ? Does not the Bible command us to come out from Babylon, in order that we “be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues ?” The tradition which makes void the word of God, is it not a sin ? Now tell me whence Rome has taken her infant baptism ?

Upon this point she herself is frank. Listen to what, upon this subject, says Rev. Father Sheffmacher in his “Manual of Controversy.” “We find in no part of the Scripture that it is necessary to baptize infants.” Page 48. “We find no example in Scripture by which we can see that infants ever were baptized.” Page 59. “Jesus Christ and the apostles baptized by immersion.” Page 76. “The Catholics prove the baptism of infants by

TRADITION." Page 119. You have it, then, dear reader, that the baptism of infants, is nothing else than a TRADITION, which the church of Rome invented in the third century—that is to say—more than two hundred years after the death of Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures prove to us, as clearly as possible, that baptism was administered to the believer only, who was buried in the water, in the name of the Holy Trinity. They do not say one word of the baptism of infants, which is a comparatively recent invention. The date of the ceremony of pouring water on an infant, in order to baptize it, can easily be discovered. This then is another tradition, which makes void the commandment of God.

Where are you then, dear friends? Are you still following the traditions and the doctrines of men? And yet, was it not with this express design that you went out from the church of Rome, in order that you might no longer be subject to the commandments of men?

But I wish to continue my argument with you yet a little further. I suppose for a moment—observe, it is only a *supposition*—

that the baptism of infants is proper. Still I ask, how can you say that the church of Rome, which according to you, is no church of Jesus Christ, has the right to administer the ordinances of Jesus Christ? "Is there any concord between Christ and Belial?" "Can you drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils?"

We must be honest and candid. Either the church of Rome *is* the church of Jesus Christ, and then she has the right to administer the ordinances of baptism and the supper—and in this case you and I have done wrong to leave her—or else she is not. If she is not the church of Jesus Christ, she has no right to administer the ordinances, and consequently you have never been baptized.

Consider attentively what I say to you, and you will see that it is not easy to refute this reasoning. But the scripture teaches us that the church of Rome is not the church of Jesus Christ. They also tell us that there is but "one baptism," Eph. iv. 5; and that this baptism is the burial of the Christian in the baptismal waters, as Jesus was buried in those of Jordan, Matt. iii. 16; as the eunuch

also was, Acts viii. 38; as the apostle Paul and the Romans also were, Rom. vi. 3, 4; as the Colossians were, Col. ii. 12; in a word, as all Christians were in the time of the apostles. They did not make void the commandments of God by their tradition, but like the Samaritans, "when they believed they were baptized, both men and women." Acts, viii. 12.

I appeal, then, to your conscience and your good sense. Where is infant baptism to be found in the Scriptures? Certainly you are not able to point out a single passage, which says that new-born babes should be baptized. It is nothing else but a miserable tradition, which the church of England, and that of Calvin and that of Luther have retained among the numerous relics of popery, which they carried out from the church of Rome, when they separated from her.

As for you, well-beloved, to whom I address myself, reject all those precepts, which are founded only upon "the commandments and doctrines of men." Col. ii. 22. Keep to the pure word of God, and since you have honestly and in good faith, gone out from the Romish

church, because she holds to TRADITIONS instead of the COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, abandon all these traditions, even to the very least.

Hearken to what the apostle Peter said to the Jews who acknowledged their sins, and wished to be reconciled to God,—“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts ii. 38. Hear what the same apostle says to Cornelius and his friends,—“Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” Acts x., 47, 48. See what Philip says to the eunuch who asked of him baptism. “If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest.” Acts viii. 37. Hearken to what the Lord Jesus Christ himself said, when he gave his commission to his apostles, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.” Mark xvi. 15, 16.

Every where faith precedes baptism. But the Church of Rome among her numerous and

sacrilegious innovations, has ordained that it is not necessary to wait in order that faith may precede; and in her temerity she has reversed the order which Jesus Christ has established.

Faith, and then baptism:—such was the command of the sovereign legislator of the Christian church.

‘Let us begin with baptism—faith may come when it can,’ says Antichrist, the man of sin, the modern Babylon, the church of Rome.

And yet, it is a lamentable fact, that certain churches which protest against the traditions of Rome, have nevertheless received this error from that very church which they repudiate on account of her traditions.

Rome in her folly and its blindness, has perverted the two ordinances of baptism and the supper, both of which she administered to infants up to the council of Trent, when she ceased the practice of administering the communion to them, but continued to administer baptism. Certain protestant churches, such as that of Luther in Germany, that of Calvin, which is the Presbyterian church of Switzer-

land and France, that of Henry VIII., which is the church of England, have had the weakness to retain this tradition of the mother of abominations.

Believe me, this custom of baptizing infants has no other authority whatever than the tradition of that very church which you have just abandoned, because, *by her tradition she makes void the word of God.*

Is it your desire, then, to retain *any* of the relics of popery? Why turn your back upon Rome at all, if you wish still to retain some one of her traditions? Can you drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of Rome at the same time? Can you partake of the table of the Lord and the table of Rome at the same time? Can there be any agreement between Jesus Christ, who has commanded the baptism of the believer by immersion, upon a public profession of faith in his name, and the church of Rome which has established the baptism of infants by sprinkling, in order that they may be regenerated by that baptism, and become members of the church, by entering into the covenant of Abraham, which no longer exists?

Can you consistently approve of those pro-

testant churches, which have separated themselves from the church of Rome *on account of her traditions*, and which have notwithstanding retained infant baptism, which owes its origin only to the will and false views of that very church which they reject, on account of her traditions?

No Romish priest is afraid to meet and discuss this subject with a protestant minister who admits infant baptism, because he can make that minister contradict himself whenever he chooses. Not so with him who administers baptism by immersion to believers only.*

The priest knows that Jesus Christ and his apostles baptized all those who believed by plunging them in the water; and he knows also that it is his own church which has established the baptism of infants. He does not dare therefore, to attack the servant of God upon this point, for he knows that the latter has the holy scriptures to sustain his baptism.

* A striking instance of the advantage of a Baptist over a Pedobaptist in reasoning with a Romish priest, is furnished in the conversation between Rev. Eugenio Kincaid and a priest, which we have inserted at the close of this tract.

The Scriptures tell us that we ought to “be ready always to give an answer to every man, a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.” 1 Pet. iii. 15.

Now suppose that while you are having your infant baptized by one of your ministers, a priest of the church of Rome enters the place where you are.

He sees you bring your child to be baptized; he says to himself, “that is well, it is just as we do.”

He sees your minister pour water upon the head of the child; he says again, “that is good, it is just as we do.”

He sees again that you give a name to your child; and he says once more, “all this is very good indeed, it is just as we do.”

If you are an Anglican, or a Swiss or French Presbyterian, he sees a god-father and a god-mother, who solemnly engage that the child shall be brought up in the Christian faith; and the priest says, “why, all this is right; it is really equal to what is done by us catholics!”

Astonished to see so much similarity between his church, which you have abandoned, and

that church which you have just chosen, he asks wherefore you have separated yourselves from the ancient mother church, which could have baptized your child just as well as your own minister.

You reply to him, that it is because you have discovered that the church of Rome makes void the commandments of God by her tradition.

Hereupon the priest asks, "is it true that you have resolved to *reject all tradition*, and to hold to nothing but the *Bible only*?" You reply in the affirmative.

Then the priest, without any hesitation, immediately appeals to the word of God that you should point out to him *one single passage*, which authorises the baptism of infants.

You hesitate no longer; you tell him that Jesus has said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." The priest replies, "Jesus did not baptize them; he only blessed them."

You quote to him the words of Peter, "the promise is unto you and to your children." Acts ii. 39. He replies that this promise is that of the Holy Spirit, which infants are

incapable of receiving ; and, moreover, that the word “ children ” does not always signify in the Bible, *infants*, but *posterity*, *descendants*.

Pursuing the subject further, you tell him that the household of Lydia, of the Philippian jailor, of Crispus and Stephanus were baptized, and that probably there were infants among the persons baptized. But the priest proves to you from the Scripture that, in the household of Lydia they were “ brethren,” Acts xvi., 40 ; that the jailor “ rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house ” ; that Crispus also “ believed on the Lord with all his house, Acts xviii., 8 ; and that the household of Stephanus “ addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.” 1 Cor. xvi., 15.

Defeated again on this point, you tell him that baptism comes in the place of circumcision ; and as, under the Abrahamic covenant, infants were circumcised, so the infants of Christians ought to be baptized. The priest answers you, that if baptism takes the place of circumcision, then that ordinance should be administered only to the same class of individuals as those to whom circumcision

was administered. Accordingly *boys* only ought to be baptized; and when a father of a family is converted, his servants and slaves, if he has any, even if they are not believers, ought to be baptized, whether they consent to it or not; because such was the law of circumcision. Furthermore, the priest shows you by the apostle's own words, that the covenant of Abraham exists no longer, but that we have a better covenant in Jesus Christ.

The last argument to which you have recourse is that of the holiness of the infant, 1 Cor. vii. 14. The priest, however, gives you no rest here, but shows you that the holiness to which allusion is there made, is a *civil holiness*, that is to say, that the children of the Corinthians to whom the apostle Paul addressed himself, were born in the ties of marriage, and were therefore legitimate.

Beaten upon all these points, you perceive that there remains not one solid argument by which you can defend your infant baptism.

Then the priest of Rome says to you, "you have turned your back upon us, because we teach traditions, and we do not deny that such is the case. We are honest in acknow-

ledging that we have taught you traditions. Your minister will not be as frank as I am. But tell me, if you please,—you who are determined no longer to follow traditions—are you able to deny that it was the church of Rome who introduced infant baptism towards the middle or end of the third century, and who sanctioned and approved it, at one of her councils, two centuries after she had invented it? You say that you no longer desire to belong to the Romish church, because she teaches traditions; and yet, in baptizing your child, you continue still to practise a tradition established by our church.”

Such would be the way in which a Romish priest would reason with those who leave his church in order to hold to the simple word of God, and who yet retain the tradition of infant baptism.

Can you serve two masters at once? Can you hold to the Bible and to tradition at the same time? If you admit the tradition of infant baptism, why not admit the tradition of administering the communion under one kind only, as the church of Rome now does? Why not give the communion to infants, as

the church of Rome did until the Council of Trent? What solid reason can you give for administering *baptism* to infants, and refusing them the communion? Why will you deceive yourselves?

Reflect seriously upon this subject. By the baptism which you administer to your infants, you follow the tradition of the Romish church, by submitting to the decree of one of her councils—that of Mela, A. D. 418; and in refusing to give them the communion, you still submit to the orders of the church of Rome, who, after having established infant communion, shortly after they established infant baptism, in the fifth century, as absolutely necessary to salvation, did, in the sixteenth century, at the council of Trent, convoked by order of the pope, decree and ordain, that the communion should no longer be administered to infants. Tradition upon tradition! Behold to what absurdity your baptism of new-born babes conducts you!

It seems to me, dear friends, that it would be no easy matter for you to reply, in a satisfactory manner, to all these questions. Be then consistent with yourselves. You have

abandoned Rome *on account of her traditions*; retain none of them therefore, *not even the least*. Throw off these rags with which she has clothed you, and put on Jesus Christ, just as his holy Word directs you.

Do you wish to know your duty? Permit me to show it to you. Are you truly the disciples of Jesus? Have you received the precious gift of faith? Then I will say to you, as the apostle Peter said to the multitudes of the Jews on the day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ," Acts ii. 38; or, in the language of the disciple Ananias to Paul, "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized," Acts xxii. 16.

You have great reason for gratitude to God, that he has delivered you from the arts and snares of "the Man of Sin," and that he has opened your eyes to enable you to see the glorious light of his holy gospel. Why should you suffer yourself still to be held in the nets of tradition, to hinder you freely walking in the new path in which God, in his infinite mercy, has placed your feet? Why will you shut your eyes, so as not to see the

light, and thus expose yourself to wander in the dark labyrinth of infant-baptism.

Was it not the church of Rome, who, in the ages of ignorance and superstition, invented this new kind of baptism, which she administers to new-born babes, with the design of snatching them from eternal condemnation? The church of Rome does not conceal it. She openly avows it. It is by means of tradition that she has established this innovation; and you, *you* are content to give it your sanction. No pedobaptist, unless one who is either grossly ignorant or strongly prejudiced, will attempt to prove infant baptism by the Holy Scriptures. The most celebrated pedobaptist authors candidly confess that tradition is the only basis upon which their doctrine rests.

Be consistent then, and reject *all* the errors of the Romish church, or be sufficiently honest and intelligent, not to pretend to rebel against her traditions, and yet persist in retaining one which is considered by the Romish church herself as one of the most important and essential. For, in truth, infant baptism has been the source, the origin, the root—and

now is the base, the pillar, and the foundation of Popery.

Believe not what men tell you; but rather have recourse "to the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah, viii. 20

APPENDIX.

THE great question of the present day, between genuine Protestants on the one hand, and Papists and Puseyites on the other is this—Is the Bible only to be received as the rule of faith, or the Bible and Tradition together? Is *no doctrine* to be received, unless it is found in the Bible; or may a doctrine be received on the authority of tradition, when it is confessedly not there?

A few years since the Rev. Dr. Hook, a distinguished advocate of the semi-papistic theology of Oxford, now known by the name of Puseyism, preached a sermon in the city of London, in the course of which he argued as follows, “you know, my hearers, that the Bible says nothing whatever of the baptism of infants; if then, you reject the authority of tradition, how can you account for infant baptism? With what consistency can

you receive this doctrine, as you do, without a question, and reject other doctrines, which are established upon *precisely the same foundation?*”

Now we maintain that the argument of the Puseyite preacher was a sound one; for the design of Dr. Hook was, not to pull down infant baptism, but to build up *tradition*; and in strict accordance with the preceding argument of Dr. Côte, we may enquire—if one doctrine be received upon the authority of tradition, why not the others? why not all the doctrines of Oxford or of Rome?

It has been remarked on a preceding page, that the Baptist, in arguing with a Papist, enjoys an immense advantage over his Pædobaptist brother. For if the latter should accuse the priest of Rome of adding to the word of God, and of receiving the doctrine of the Pope’s supremacy, indulgences, relics, and other absurdities, *upon the mere authority of tradition*, the Papist may retort, and often has retorted, with irresistible force—“if you condemn these doctrines, because they are received upon the traditions of the Holy

Catholic Church, let me ask you one question—*where do you get your infant baptism?*”

As an illustration of this advantage enjoyed by the Baptist over the Pædobaptist in arguing with the Roman Catholic, we will append to this little treatise, the following account of a somewhat amusing conversation which occurred a few years ago, between the well-known Baptist missionary, Rev. Eugenio Kincaid, and a Jesuit professor. The account is given from the pen of Mr. Kincaid himself, and was written on board of a steamboat on the Ohio.

“There is,” says Mr. Kincaid, “a French Jesuit priest—a professor of languages in a Popish college in Kentucky—on board the boat with me.

“Sitting in my state room, with a small Bible in my hand, the Jesuit came along, and very politely inquired what book I had. Being informed, he said, in the most bland and winning manner, ‘Good, good,’ and then, for some minutes, went on describing the glory and perpetuity of the church—all the while fixing his dark and piercing eye on me, as if he would read my inmost soul.

“The great and cardinal dogma of popery, *infallibility* in morals and religion, at length showed itself; and then he appealed to me if I did not feel the importance of having an infallible guide. ‘Certainly,’ I replied; ‘the reason of man utterly fails in being a safe guide in religion.’ ‘Good, good,’ exclaimed the Jesuit; ‘you will be a Catholic yet.’

“Opening my Bible, I said, ‘Here is my infallible guide in morals and religion.’ ‘Very good, very good,’ rejoined the Jesuit; ‘but who shall be the interpreter of the Bible?’ ‘Do you take Luther?’ ‘No.’ ‘Do you take Calvin?’ ‘No.’ ‘Do you take Arius and Socinus?’ ‘No.’ ‘Well, you take Wesley then?’ ‘No; I take the Bible, and utterly reject all human authority.’

“‘You make yourself wiser than Calvin or Luther. You must be a very great man, and have a very good opinion of yourself.’ ‘No; I have so good an opinion of the Bible, and such confidence in the wisdom of Paul, and Peter, and John, that their authority is every thing to me.’ ‘Good, good,’ replied the Jesuit; ‘I see you will be right yet. Did not Christ say to his church, I will be with

you always, to the end of the world? And when the Apostles died, did they not have successors; and was not Christ with them, and then with their successors? and so on in the third, and fourth, and fifth centuries? Did not Christ speak truth—I *will* be with you, even to the end of the world? There was only the one Catholic church for the first four or five hundred years, and is not the Catholic church the same now as it was then? And do you not see, as in Oxford, the most learned Protestants in the world are going back to the Apostolic church?’

“‘True,’ I replied, ‘the Apostles, as Christians, had successors; but, *as Apostles*, they had no successors. In the early ages there were false Apostles and false Christs, and they deceived many. So Paul wrote—Let no man deceive you by any means; for there shall come a falling away, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. And in another place—for the time will come when

they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.'

“ ‘Hence the oft-repeated command of Christ, —He that hath an ear to hear let him hear —what? What Popes and Cardinals have said? What councils have decreed? What Prelates and Doctors have written? No such thing. Christ says—Let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Here is the infallible guide ; the teachings of the Spirit—and these *teachings* make up the word of God. Those who hold fast the doctrine of Christ are the true successors of the Apostles ; and there have been such in all ages, since the resurrection of Christ, and to them is fulfilled that promise—Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’

“ ‘Do not all the Protestants talk in this way?’ exclaimed the Jesuit ; ‘and are there not forty different kinds of Protestants in America, and how can any one tell which is right.’

“ ‘Many,’ I replied, ‘calling themselves

Protestants, broke off from the Roman church, and brought along more or less of the dogmas of that church. The Roman church has made up her creed partly from Christianity, partly from Judaism, and partly from Paganism; and now many, leaving Paganism behind, still blend together Judaism and Christianity.—Hence, even until this day, when Moses is read, (as authoritative in religion) the veil is upon their heart. To this source may be traced nearly all the errors of pious Protestants.’

“‘Is it not a little remarkable,’ said the Jesuit, ‘that the only two dogmas in the support of which the Catholic church depends entirely on tradition the Protestants have adopted—the change of the Sabbath, and the baptism of infants? Now, you cannot prove from your Bible that the Sabbath was changed, or that infants were to be baptized.’

“Very well,” I replied, “I hold to nothing but what is clearly taught in the Bible. I keep the first day of the week because the first Christians observed it, and there is no evidence that they met together on any other day for Christian worship. That the disciples met together on the first day of the week to

engage in acts of Christian worship, and that they designed to meet on the *first* in preference to any other day, and that it was sanctioned by Paul, is a recorded fact. Here, then, I stand on Apostolic ground.' 'You must prove, then,' said the Jesuit, 'that the command in the decalogue is repealed.' 'No—that command stands, and is as binding on me as it was on the primitive Christians. Six days shalt thou labor, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. The disciples, in the days of Paul, labored six days in the week; but no more. On the first day in the week, they met together in their Christian assemblies. Here, then, is Divine authority for meeting together on the first day of the week for Christian worship.'

" 'Yes,' said the Jesuit, 'you do read in your Bible that the Christians came together on the first day of the week to break bread; but *you cannot find in your Bible that the Apostles baptized infants*,—this you have got from the Catholic church, and yet you abuse the Catholic church for depending on TRADITION. How can you say *my Bible alone is my rule*, and then baptize infants?'"

“Very true, sir,” was the triumphant reply of Mr. Kincaid, a reply which none but a Baptist could have made, “very true, there is no Divine authority for infant baptism, it is *based only on tradition*, and so *I reject it altogether*. Infant baptism is the offspring of a Judaizing spirit, and betrays great ignorance of the true character of a Christian church,—through its influence whole nations, without reference to character, are brought into the church. I regard infant baptism, in its practice or tendency, as one of the worst dogmas of Popery. Let it be taken from the system, and believers’ baptism be restored, and the whole superstructure of Rome will crumble down.”

The Jesuit priest soon found that he had more than his match in the unpretending Baptist minister, whom he had striven to convert to the dogmas of Rome; and that it was no use arguing longer with one who denied *in toto* the authority of tradition, and built his faith upon the BIBLE ONLY; and therefore, with his dark piercing eyes flashing inquisitorial fire, he retired from the controversy, leaving Mr. Kincaid to his own reflections.

THE
PRIMITIVE CHURCHMAN.

OR,

REASONS

WHY I AM NOT AN EPISCOPALIAN.

Third Edition.

PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
530 ARCH STREET.

"The right disposition of mind is, that which desires earnestly "The Truth!" "The Truth!" in whatever manner it may come to us. Not that the manner of its being conveyed is quite indifferent; far from it; but "The Truth," howsoever it come, has its own intrinsic—eternal value. And what a fool I am, if I will not take it, and apply it to its use, just because the manner of its coming to me has not pleased me!"

FOSTER.

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PREFACE.

To all who do not love "*a Church*" better than they love *Christ*—and are willing to receive the truth in the love of it—this Tract is inscribed. As an apology for writing it (a work but little congenial to his feelings,) the author would state that, besides the sectarian book styled "*A Walk about Zion*," a pamphlet designed not to make people Christians but "*Episcopalians*," has been circulated most industriously among his parishioners.

Without saying any thing of the unkindness with which these productions assail all other denominations, and the arrogance which puts forth claims that are a speculation on the ignorance of readers. I shall in a few words give the reasons why I am not, and cannot be an Episcopalian; much as I love and revere many who belong to that sect, which rather invidiously seeks to monopolize the word "*Church*."

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THE
PRIMITIVE CHURCHMAN:

OR,

REASONS WHY I AM NOT AN EPISCOPALIAN.

IT is of most solemn importance to every man what Church he joins, since by that act he throws all his influence in favor of her doctrines and practices, and against those Churches which differ from her. For this step, therefore, we must give account to God. And, while I yield to none in esteem for many in the Episcopal Church, and although I admire the beauty of her liturgies as I do of other fine compositions, I dare not unite myself with that Church, and for several reasons:—

REASON I.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH RETAINS SOME OF THE
VITAL ROOTS OF ROMANISM.

I cannot be an Episcopalian, (and if there were no other reasons this would be enough,) *because the Episcopal Church has brought out with her from the Roman, and perpetuates practices and doctrines repugnant to Scripture and to common sense.* And, in proof of this, I ask the reader only to take the book of Common Prayer, and turn to the chapter on the Baptism of Infants, and decide for himself.

1. First, see this—"There shall be for every male child to be baptized, when they can be had, two God-fathers and one God-mother; and for every female, one God-father and two God-mothers." Now, is there a pretence of reason or Scripture for such a practice? Is it not an invention of man?

2. These sponsors are often unconverted and wicked people; but I do not dwell on this, because the almost incredible part of the whole

affair is, *that the Rubric considers the questions as actually put to the child, and answered by the child!* The Minister says to the sponsor, "*Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?*" The sponsor replies, "*That is my desire.*" Hearing this, you conclude, of course, that he is the candidate, and "desires," and is about to receive, baptism. In this, however, you only betray your simplicity. The man who says "that is my desire," has no such desire at all. It was the infant who spoke, and the Minister accordingly pours water, not on the sponsor, but the child! In the Church of Rome, Augustine gives us the form invented, and which, like the form before us, was a pious artifice to meet the plain requirement of the Bible, that repentance and faith must precede baptism. The Roman formulary was thus:—"Doth this child believe in God? Doth he turn to God?" The framers of the Prayer Book seem to have felt that this was too glaring. They have therefore introduced a strange medley; at first making the sponsor renounce for the child; and then getting back into the Romish fiction that it is the child itself that answers. I quote the whole.

Minister. Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh; so that thou wilt not follow, nor be led by them?

Answer. I renounce them all; and by God's help, will endeavor not to follow, nor be led by them. (THIS IS "IN THE NAME OF THE CHILD.")

Minister. Dost thou believe all the articles of the Christian Faith, as contained in the Apostles' Creed?

Answer. I do. (*Is this "in the name of the child" too?—i. e. "in the name of this child, I do believe?"*)

Minister. Wilt thou be baptized in this Faith?

Answer. That is my desire. (*Here we have the child!*)

Minister. Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?

Answer. I will, by God's help." (*Who will?*)

3. The Episcopal Church does teach the

dangerous heresy of Baptismal Regeneration. I cheerfully admit, that her evangelical Ministers reject this doctrine, for when these very children, who have been pronounced "regenerated," grow to years of discretion, they are exhorted as to the necessity of regeneration; and, indeed, we hear them spoken of as being then regenerated, and joining the Church. But this only proves that such Ministers should leave that Church. For what contradiction! A. B., when six months old, is pronounced "*regenerated by the Holy Spirit, made God's own child by adoption, and incorporated into God's Holy Church;*" and yet, some years afterwards, this very child is told he must be regenerated! And the Minister very gravely tells you, when A. B. is thirty years old, that he is regenerated and has joined the Church. What! regenerated twice? And what Church has he joined—for he has been for thirty years "incorporated into God's Holy Church?" That my readers may see that this is the doctrine of the Episcopal Church, although many who are allured there know it not and deny it, I here quote her own language, which, of course, all her members declare to be their creed:—

“Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, *that this child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ’s Church*, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto him, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning !!

“We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that *it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy Holy Church*. And humbly we beseech thee to grant, that he, *being dead unto sin and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death*, may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; and that *as he is made partaker of the death of thy Son*, he may also be partaker of his resurrection; so that finally, with the residue of thy holy Church, he may be an inheritor of thine everlasting kingdom, through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

And the child is afterwards confirmed in this doctrine, and made (O parents, will you thus nourish in your offspring a fatal delusion?) to repeat it in the Catechism.

“ *Question.* What is your name ?

Answer. N. or M.

Question. Who gave you this name ?

Answer. My sponsors in baptism; *wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.*”

Now reader, in a few days you and I will stand at the bar of God—that God who says, “If any man shall add unto these things, I will add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, I will take away his part out of the book of life;” (a)—and I ask, will you, can you lend all your authority to these doctrines and practices, and against the Churches which are struggling for the truths of the Gospel.*

(a) Rev. xxii: 18, 19. .

* With what grace can Episcopalians say, that Baptists make too much of Baptism? Does any Baptist hold doctrines like these? Do they not require a profession of faith and repentance before Baptism? And are they not most strict in rejecting candidates who ascribe to water any saving virtue?

REASON II.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH HAS ABOLISHED THE
PRIMITIVE POPULAR GOVERNMENT.

I cannot be an Episcopalian, because the Episcopal Church has *entirely abolished the popular form of government instituted by Christ and his Apostles and introduced one which is aristocratical*. This subject has been placed in such a light by Neander, and Coleman, and Barnes, in their late works, that if a candid person will read those authors, he must esteem this second reason quite as strong as the first. To defend their Church organization, Episcopal writers sometimes pretend that the Church in England was founded in the time of the Apostles, and even that Paul was the founder! To those acquainted with the Acts of the Apostles, giving the history of Paul, this last claim will serve as a sample of the rest. Every body knows that the Church of England commenced in the reign of King Henry VIII, (A. D. 1533,) and owed its origin

to the worst passions of a Monarch who opposed the Reformation, and wrote against it, and only left the Church of Rome because the Pope righteously refused him a divorce. Suppose, however, the Apostles had planted Churches in Great Britain, this would only put them on the same footing with those at Rome and Corinth, &c., and it is certain the Churches organized at those places were not Episcopal; they were independent popular assemblies, vested with rights which the Bishops and Clergy of the Episcopal Church arrogate to themselves.

1. The Apostolic Churches exercised, themselves, the power of discipline—thus securing to each member the right of trial by his peers; and even inspired Apostles did not venture to trench upon this prerogative. The language of the Saviour is, “If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, *tell it unto the Church*: but if he *neglect to hear the Church*, let him

be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." (a) The language of the Holy Ghost to the Churches, is, "If any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company with him that he may be ashamed." (b) "Do not ye" (the Church,) "judge them that are within? (members of the Church,) therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (c) "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *when ye are gathered together*, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (d) "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, *which was inflicted of many*, (the majority,) so that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." (e) "It is manifest," as Neander remarks, "that the rule is here set forth, requiring the action of the Church in all such concerns of general interest." (f) But in the Episcopal Church the

(a) Matt. xviii. 15-17. (b) 2 Thess. iii. 14. (c) 1 Cor. v. 12, 13. (d) 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. (e) 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7. (f) Allgem. Gesch., 1. p. 292. Comp. p. 350. Apost. Kirch., 1. pp. 319, 320.

whole power over all the Churches in a Diocese, is usurped by one man, who is called the Bishop, and is sole arbiter, though often a stranger. The course there is, "*tell it to the Bishop!*" and he decides without regard to the Church.

2. The entire government of the Apostolic Churches was popular. The members of each Church enacted all their rules, and managed all their affairs by suffrage. "With them resided the power of enacting laws, as also of adopting or rejecting whatever might be proposed in the general assemblies, and of expelling and again receiving into communion, any depraved or unworthy members. In a word, nothing whatever, of any moment, could be determined on, or carried into effect, without their knowledge and concurrence." (*g*) And this is admitted by the most learned Episcopalians, as Riddle, (*h*) Bingham, (*i*) Whatly, (*j*) and others. I need not say that the members of Episcopal Churches are entirely deprived of this right by the priesthood.

(*g*) Mosheim, De Rebus Christ., Saec. 1, § 45. (*h*) Chron. 2nd Cen. (*i*) B. 16. (*j*) Kingdom of Christ.

REASON III.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH HAS CHANGED THE
PRIMITIVE CHURCH OFFICERS.

I am not an Episcopalian, *because the Church, as instituted by the authority of the New Testament, had only two classes of officers, Presbyters, (viz: Elders,) and Deacons; and the third class, styled in England Lord Bishops, and in this country misnamed Bishops, is the creation of spiritual ambition, and condemned both by the spirit and letter of the Bible.*

1. With reference to Presbyters (named also according to the work to which they devoted themselves, Pastors, or Teachers, or Overseers) I will only call the reader's attention to the fact, admitted by Episcopalians, that whenever the term Bishop occurs in the New Testament, it describes the Presbyter, and never, in one instance, has the meaning which is now attached to it, viz: Prelate. Even Dr. Onderdonk says, "that name (bishop) is there, (i. e. in the New Testament,) given to the

middle order or Presbyters; and all that we read in the New Testament concerning 'Bishops' (including of course the words 'overseers,' and 'oversight,' which have the same derivation;) is to be regarded as pertaining to that middle grade. It was after the Apostolic age, that the name 'Bishop' was taken from the second order, and appropriated to the first." (*k*)

2. As to Deacons, I refer the reader to Acts vi., when they were first chosen, their election being by "the multitude of disciples," and their office the supervision of the temporal affairs of the Church. In 1 Tim. iii., the Holy Ghost gives the qualifications necessary for the officers of the Christian Church, viz: of Bishops, (i. e. pastors,) and Deacons, and while the former are required to be "apt to teach," no such talent is demanded of the latter. We find, too, in Rom. xvi. 1, that women (who are forbidden to teach, 1 Tim. ii. 12) were Deacons; the word "servant of the Church" being "Diakonos," "Deacon." All this is violated in the Episcopal Church; the Deacons are not chosen by the disciples, and as the Presbyters in their ambition became Prelates,

the Deacons moved up too, and became an inferior order of Presbyters.

3. The great assumption of Episcopacy, however, rests on the order of Prelates; and here I will repeat what Episcopal Churchmen are compelled to admit, and what Bishop Onderdonk, the great champion of his order, confesses, "*that it was after the Apostolic age that the name 'Bishop' was taken from the second order, and appropriated to the first.*" (1) My reader will not expect me to do more than indicate one or two of the arguments by which this innovation of Romanism, still persisted in by the Episcopal Church, has again and again been overthrown.

(1.) In the first place, then, we see Episcopalians confessing *that they have perverted the use of the term "Bishop!"* Now why this? Plainly, because the Prelatical office has no existence in the Bible, or else it would have had a name. We are sometimes gravely told that Bishops are successors of the Apostles. Well why not, then, call them Apostles? Who but perceives that such a title would at once have exposed the arrogance of the thing, and that

(1) Ond. Epis. p. 12.

the word Bishop has been purloined only for a disguise, in which spiritual usurpation may masquerade and elude detection?

(2.) In 1 Tim. iii., God gives the perfect canon of Scripture, as to the qualification of permanent officers for the Church, and there are only two, viz: Bishops (i. e. Pastors,) and Deacons. There is not an intimation of this third and lordly order. It is, therefore, not only without an appellation in the Bible, but without any required qualifications! It was neither named nor contemplated by the Holy Ghost.

(3.) Every candid reader of the Bible perceives that the Apostles were chosen for a special and temporary purpose, and the peculiarity of their office is expressly specified. They were chosen: 1st, to be with Christ, and to be endowed with miraculous powers, which they also conferred on others—"And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have *power to heal sickness, and to cast out devils.*"(m) 2nd, to be eye-witnesses of the resurrection—"Wherefore of these men which

(m) Mark iii. 14, 15.

have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be *a witness with us of his resurrection.*” “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are *witnesses.*” (n) 3rd, to be with the Saviour after his resurrection—“Him hath God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did *eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.*” (o) And hence Paul rests his title to Apostleship on this very fact—“Am I not an Apostle, am I not free, *have I not seen the Lord.*” (p) Will it be pretended that Episcopal Prelates are Apostles after this? Their fear of taking the name is an acknowledgement that they feel the claim to be utterly indefensible. Whately, an Archbishop, (here is another rank higher than Bishop!) frankly declares that “Successors, in the apostolic office, the Apostles have none. As witnesses of the resurrection—as dispensers of miraculous gifts

(n) Acts i. 21, 22, also ii. 32. (o) Acts x. 40, 41
 (p) 1 Cor. ix. 1.

—as inspired oracles of divine revelation, they have no successors. But as members—as ministers—as governors of Christian communities, their successors are the regularly admitted members—the lawfully ordained ministers—the regular and recognized governors, of a regularly subsisting Christian Church.” (q)

(4.) But even the twelve Apostles never usurped the powers now arrogated by diocesan Bishops. We have seen already that the right to choose officers (and even an Apostle, Acts i.) was in the popular body. We have shown that the prerogatives of discipline and government were also in the body. The Apostles never put forward the proud claims of Episcopal Bishops, as to these matters; nor as to others.

For example: did Jesus Christ institute any other rites than Baptism and the Supper? Whence then the ordinance of *confirmation*? Both the Old and New Testaments speak of “laying on of hands.” “Thus Jacob in blessing the sons of Joseph, laid his hands upon their heads.” So, Jesus “took young children in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands

upon them." And Paul and Barnabas were dismissed, to go on their missionary tour, with the blessing of the brethren at Antioch, "by the laying on of hands," (Acts xiii. 3,) although they had long been engaged in ministerial duties. But to create an ordinance out of this is palpable contrivance to give importance to the Bishop. Episcopalians themselves differ as to what this apochryphal ceremony means. If it be only a mode of pronouncing a benediction, or of admitting members to the church, adopted for expediency, no notice would be required of it, except to ask, why the Pastor may not perform the office? Episcopalians, however, maintain that there is Scriptural authority, and cite Acts viii. 14-17, and Acts xix. 1-7. But in these cases, visible miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost were imparted; and Bishops must show that these visible miraculous gifts are now imparted, or these texts prove nothing. Nor does Heb. vi. 1, 2, furnish evidence of anything except the imposition of hands in some cases, which no one denies, and which is now practised in all Churches. So, too, of superiority over other Presbyters: did the Apostles assert it? Just the reverse. Their

language is constantly that of men addressing equals; (1 Pet. v. i.) "Even the Apostles, though next to Christ himself, invested with the highest authority, assumed no superiority over the Presbyters, but treated them as brethren, and styled themselves fellow-presbyters, thus recognizing them as associates in office." (r)

And so again as to *ordination*: while the Apostles, as Presbyters, ordained, they allowed the same power to other Presbyters. Episcopalians deny this right to any Presbyters but the unauthorized order of Prelates; it is, therefore, their duty to establish by positive proof this high-handed exclusiveness. The truth, however, is, that if Episcopal ordination be valid at all, it is only as an ordination by Presbyters. The Bishop is only a Presbyter, and ordination in the New Testament was by a Presbytery, viz: a council of Presbyters, and of this 1 Tim. iv. 14, is conclusive: "*Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.*" This is exactly the account of an ordination now in Presbyterian, Congregational, or Baptist Churches. Episcopalians say

(r) Apostol. Christengemeinen. Halberstadt, 1819.

the Apostles were distinguished from the Elders by the power to ordain, and yet Jesus never intimates this as part of their duties, although he gives them minute directions; nor when the Seventy were sent forth, was any such function assigned them; nor is it pretended that the Apostles ever declared this work to belong to their office. In cases, in fact, of some most eminent Preachers mentioned in the Bible, it is certain the Apostles never laid hands on them at all. For example, who ordained Apollos? (Acts xviii. 24-27.) And so, too, Paul himself, what apostolic ordination had he? As soon as converted he began to "*preach Christ straightway.*" (Acts ix. 20) "What, then, is Ordination? The answer is, a decent and becoming solemnity, adopted from the Jewish customs by the primitive Church, significant of the separation of an individual to some specific appointment in the Christian Ministry, and constituting both a recognition on the part of the officiating Presbyters of the Ministerial character of the person appointed, and a desirable sanction of the proceedings of the Church. It is, however, something more than a mere circumstance, the imposition of hands being

designed to express that fervent benediction which accompanied the ceremony, and which constitutes the true spirit of the rite. To an occasion which, when the awful responsibility of the pastoral charge is adequately felt, imparts to the prayers and the affectionate aid of those who are fathers and brethren in the Ministry, a more special value, the sign and solemn act of benediction must appear peculiarly appropriate. This venerable ceremony may also be regarded as a sort of bond of fellowship among the Churches of Christ, a sign of unity, and an act of brotherhood." (s)

(5.) In fine, all the efforts of Episcopalians to find such an officer as their Prelate, in the Bible, are as fruitless as they would be to find archbishops, cardinals, and popes. Timothy was an evangelist in Ephesus, and Titus in Crete, just as now we have missionaries in foreign lands, to whom instructions are sent as to their course of action, and the regulation of Churches of native converts. To say they were prelatical Bishops, is not only to affirm the very thing which ought to be proved, but to repeat

(s) Cond. Prot. Non. Vol. i. p. 242.

what has over and over been disproved. (*t*) After all their labor and research, Episcopalians are reduced to the figment that the 'Angels' addressed in the letters to the seven Churches, must have been Prelates. But I cannot suppose it necessary to refute this. Where is the evidence? "How much," says Neander, "must we assume as already proved, which yet is entirely without evidence, in assigning to this early period, the rise of such a monarchical system of government, that the Bishop alone can be put in the place of the whole Church. In this phraseology I recognize rather a symbolical application of the idea of guardian angels, similar to that of the Ferver of the Persees, as a symbolical representation and image of the whole Church. Such a figurative representation corresponds well with the poetical and symbolical character of the book throughout. It is also expressly said that the address is to the whole body of the Churches."(*u*) And Stillingfleet, than whom an abler man, and one whose praise is higher in Episcopal Churches, is not to be found among the advocates of prelacy, says

(*t*) See Coleman and Barnes, *passim*. (*u*) Introduction to Coleman.

of these Angels: "If many things in the epistles be directed to the angels, but yet so as to concern the whole body, then, of necessity, the angel must be taken as the representative of the whole body; and then, why may not the word angel be taken by way of representation of the body itself, either of the whole Church, or, which is far more probable, of the consessors, or order of Presbyters, in that Church? We see what miserable, unaccountable arguments those are, which are brought for any kind of government, from metaphorical or ambiguous expressions, or names promiscuously used." (v) My reader will judge from this, what confidence to put in the bold, unscrupulous, unblushing statements hazarded on this point by the writer of the "Reasons for being an Episcopalian."

(v) Irenicum.

REASON IV.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH UNDULY EXALTS THE
AUTHORITY OF THE FATHERS.

To support errors clearly condemned by the Bible, it is customary with different denominations to cite the early 'Fathers,' as they are called. If the reader will peruse Taylor's 'Ancient Christianity,' written by an Episcopalian, he will be astonished at the respect hitherto paid to patristic authority. And if he have time to consult those 'Fathers' himself, he will find that there is scarcely an absurdity but may be defended by passages from them. On this subject there is an admirable article in the *Edinburg Review* for April, 1843. "We are convinced, (says the Review,) that nothing more is needed than the indiscriminate exposure of an impartial sample of the works of these unparalleled writers to the popular gaze, to obliterate that feeling of traditional reverence with which they are regarded. The drunken Helots never taught the Spartans a more

wholesome lesson of temperance, than the imitable antics of these holy men would teach the present age, of the folly of deferring to them, as our spiritual guides; and still more of investing them, under any conditions, with the authority of Scripture." Even when John wrote the Revelation there were many corruptions to censure, as we find in the letters to the Churches in Asia; nay, in Paul's Epistles, mention is made of those who were seeking to advance their ambitious views by innovations in the Churches he had founded. It would, therefore, be no matter of surprise, if spiritual usurpations had begun in the very first century.

But in truth, the Episcopal clergy cannot obtain support for their encroachments, even from the early Fathers. The great bulwark of Episcopalians is Ignatius, as to whose Epistles, it is enough to remark, that they are pronounced by some most learned men, to be the fabrications of a later age; and incontestibly, they have been so interpolated as to be unworthy of any confidence. My readers know the weight of Milton's name on such a question, and hear what he says, after exposing the anachronisms and contradictions of the work:

“These, and other like passages, in abundance through all those short epistles, must either be adulterate, or else Ignatius was not Ignatius, nor a martyr, but most adulterate and corrupt himself. In the midst, therefore, of so many forgeries, where shall we fix, to dare say this is Ignatius? As for his style, who knows it, so disfigured and interrupted as it is, except they think that where they meet with anything sound and orthodoxal, there they find Ignatius? And then they believe him, not for his own authority, but for a truth’s sake, which they derive from elsewhere. To what end, then, should they cite him as authentic for Episcopacy, when they cannot know what is authentic in him, but by the judgment which they brought with them, and not by any judgment which they might safely learn from him? How can they bring satisfaction from such an author, to whose very essence the reader must be fain to contribute his own understanding? Had God ever intended that we should have sought any part of useful instructions from Ignatius, doubtless he would not have so ill provided for our knowledge, as to send him to our hands in this broken and disjointed plight; and

if he intended no such thing, we do injuriously, in thinking to taste better the pure evangelic manna, by seasoning our mouth with the tainted scraps and fragments of an unknown table; and searching among the verminous and polluted rags, dropped overworn from the toiling shoulders of Time; with these deformedly to quilt and interlace the entire, the spotless and undecaying robe of Truth, the daughter, not of Time, but of Heaven, only bred up here below in Christian hearts between two grave and holy nurses, the doctrine and discipline of the gospel." (*w*)

Even, however, if these Epistles of Ignatius were genuine, they would not sustain the position of the Episcopal Church. Let the reader bear in mind the concessions given before, that the word 'Bishop' was at first never used to signify anything but a Pastor, and he will find the vaunted passages from Ignatius not at all implying any superiority of Bishops over Presbyters. Ignatius' Bishops were plainly Pastors of only one Church, and not lords over many; and there are now hundreds of Independent and Baptist Churches, to which a letter would

(*w*) Milton's Prel. Epis. P. W. vol. 1, pp. 79-80.

speak of the "Bishop" (or Pastor) and "Presbyters" (Ministers who are members, and, perhaps, assist the Pastor,) and "Deacons." If Ignatius' Epistles were not written in or near the first century, they are forgeries; if they were, they do not prove diocesan Episcopacy; for the word "Bishop" then meant only the overseer of a Church, as is admitted by the Prelatists themselves. Dr. Burton, regius Professor at Oxford, speaking of the beginning of the third century, says, "The term diocese, as has been observed in a former chapter, was of later introduction, and was borrowed by the Church from the civil constitution of the empire. At the period which we are now considering, a Bishop's diocese was more analogous to a modern parish, and such was the name which it bore. Each parish had, therefore, its own Bishop, with a varying number of Presbyters, or Priests and Deacons." (x) So Lord Chancellor King—"As for the word diocese, by which the Bishop's flock is now expressed, I do not remember that ever I found it used in this sense by any of the ancients. But there is another word still retained by us, by which

(x) Hist. Christ Ch. p. 179.

they frequently denominated the Bishop's cure ; and that is parish." (y) "Every Bishop had but one congregation or Church. This is a remark which deserves your particular notice ; as it regards an essential point in the constitution of the primitive Church, a point which is generally admitted by those who can make any pretensions to the knowledge of Christian antiquities. Now as one Bishop is invariably considered in the most ancient usage as having only one *Ekklesia*, (Church,) it is manifest that his inspection at first, was only one parish." (z) "Instead, therefore, of presiding over myriads of his fellow-men with authority, which even princes might envy, this your ancient Bishop was nothing more than an humble parish minister, having the charge of some little flock over whom he had been duly appointed an overseer in the service of the Chief Shepherd." (a).

If the reader will consult Coleman's masterly treatise he will find this matter forever settled, and he will see, too, that the only works of remote antiquity known to be genuine, disprove the claims of Episcopal Prelates. In fact,

(y) King's Prim. Ch., p. 15. (z) Camp. Lect., p. 105.
(a) Coleman, p. 203.

even as late as the fifth century, we find Jerome, who is admitted by Episcopalians to have been the most learned man of his age, attacking these haughty usurpations. He says "A Presbyter, therefore, is the same as a Bishop: and before there were, by the instigation of the devil, parties in religion, and it was said among different people, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, the Churches were governed by the joint counsel of the Presbyters. But afterwards, when every one accounted those whom he baptized as belonging to himself and not to Christ, it was decreed throughout the whole world that one, chosen from among the Presbyters, should be put over the rest, and that the whole care of the Church should be committed to him, and the seeds of schism taken away. Should any one think that this is only my own private opinion, and not the doctrine of the Scriptures, let him read the words of the Apostle in his Epistle to the Philippians: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons," &c. Philippi is a single city of Macedonia; and certainly in one city there could not be

several Bishops as they are now styled ; but as they, at that time, called the very same persons Bishops whom they called Presbyters, the Apostle has spoken without distinction of Bishops as Presbyters. Should this matter yet appear doubtful to any one, unless it be proved by an additional testimony, it is written in the Acts of the Apostles, that when Paul had come to Miletus, he sent to Ephesus and called the Presbyters of that Church, and among other things said to them, ‘Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you Bishops.’ Take particular notice, that calling the Presbyters of the single city of Ephesus, he afterwards names the same persons Bishops.” (b)

It is thus certain that all the passages quoted from Eusebius and others, have nothing to do with Prelates, the word Bishop meaning Pastor of a Church, and there being no such officer then as the modern Prelate.

And here I might stop. There is however such ignorance or disingenuousness, in the Tract called “Reasons why I am an Episcopalian,” that I must add a word more.

(b) Hieronymi Com. in Tit. i. 1.

This writer adduces Irenæus, (A. D. 180,) but either does not see, or by a play on words wishes to conceal from his readers the fact, that the very quotations show a Bishop to have been a Pastor over one Church. "Polycarp was Bishop over the Church in Smyrna," &c. Here the most illustrious man of his time is only Bishop of one Church; and I now add that Irenæus expressly styles Polycarp, afterwards, "that blessed Presbyter." (c) Again, the Tract writer cites this passage, "We can enumerate those who were constituted by the Apostles, Bishops in the Churches; their successors, also, even down to our time." But just before Irenæus styles these very Bishops, "Presbyters." (d) I have before me other quotations from Irenæus, but cannot suppose them necessary. The author of the Tract, next brings forward Tertullian, (A. D. 200,) and the reader will discover, at a glance, that he hopes to succeed by the usual jugglery, with the word Bishop, for the quotations recognize only the Bishop or Pastor of a Church. The Prelatical usurpation was clearly unknown even then; for

(c) Euseb., Eccl. Hist., Lib. 5, c. 20. (d) Irenæus, Adv. Haer., L. 3, c. 2.

take the strongest passage, viz: "Neither Presbyters, nor Deacons, might baptize without the Bishop's consent." Now, does this apply to Prelacy? Is it so that the Presbyters do not baptize without in each case obtaining the Prelate's consent? The passage plainly teaches, only what is now true in non-Episcopal Churches i. e., that the Pastor is the person to baptize, and others should not baptize candidates for admission into his Church without his consent. Tertullian stood "on the boundary between two different epochs," and in his writings we see the beginning of the Prelatical encroachments. He expressly tells us that one of the Presbyters was chosen President, and shows the origin of the order which now claims supremacy over other Presbyters and over hundreds of Churches, as if by warrant from God. This Presidency soon became a permanent office, and then the word Bishop was misapplied to cover it with a color of Scriptural authority.

Clement of Alexandria, (A. D. 220,) is our Tractarian's next authority. The reader will notice that he speaks of the Pastor, or Bishop of a Church, distinguishing him from a Presbyter, not as superior, but simply, as having

charge of a Church, and he shows fully elsewhere, that there were but two orders. He says expressly, "Just so in the Church, the Presbyters are entrusted with the dignified Ministry; the Deacons with the subordinate."(e)

He speaks, too, of the Presbyter chosen by the Presbytery to be the President. Soon after this, the title President was dropped and the word Bishop surreptitiously appropriated. The admitted import of the term Bishop need only be recollected, and the other passages cited in the so called Churchman's Tract, will demand no further comment from me. When we come to the fourth century, the Episcopal usurpations are established; but we find also most of the other corruptions of Romanism.

Had I time, I would gladly cite authors, whom Episcopalians carefully avoid. For example, Clement of Rome, is the first and most authentic of all the early Fathers. He wrote, A. D. 96, and he is express. He shows clearly that there were but two orders of officers. He says, "The Apostles preaching in countries and cities, appointed the first fruits of their labors, to be Bishops and Deacons, having

(e) Strom. Lib., 7. p. 700.

proved them by the Spirit.” (*f*) “Clement himself,” says Riddle, an Episcopalian, “was not even aware of the distinction between Bishops and Presbyters; terms which in fact he uses as synonymous.” (*g*)

(*f*) Epist. ad Cor. § 42, p. 57. (*g*) Christ. Antiq., p. 5.

REASON V.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH MAKES UNSCRIPTURAL
PRETENSIONS.

It was the complaint of a distinguished writer, that "people do not know when a thing is proved;" but if my reader be candid, he will confess that I have established several things. 1. I have shown that the Episcopal Church has brought out from Rome, and perpetuates, doctrines and practices repugnant to Scripture and reason. 2. I have proved that the Episcopal Church has subverted the form of government established by Jesus Christ and the Apostles. 3. It is clear that she has erected a new and unscriptural order in the Ministry.

And now, if this be so, for me to be an Episcopalian, would be to lend my influence and contributions to support these abuses, and not only these but others growing out of them.

1. It would be to support those pretensions about Ordination, which are designed to magnify

the Prelates. Clarkson, himself an Episcopalian, says, "A Bishop, in the best ages of Christianity, was no other than the Pastor of a single Church. A Pastor of a single congregation is now as truly a Bishop. They were duly ordained in those ages, who were set apart for the work of the Ministry by the Pastor of a single Church, with the concurrence of some assistants. Why they should not be esteemed to be duly ordained, who are accordingly set apart by a Pastor of a single Church now, I can discern no reason, after I have looked every way for it. Let something be assigned which will make an essential difference herein; otherwise they that judge such Ordinations here, and in other Reformed Churches, to be nullities, will hereby declare all the ordinations in the ancient Church for three or four hundred years, to be null and void, and must own the dismal consequences that ensue therefrom. They that will have no ordinations but such as are performed by one who has many Churches under him, maintain a novelty never known nor dreamt of in the ancient Churches, while their state was tolerable. They may as well say the ancient Church had never a Bishop, (if their interest

did not hinder—all the reason they make use of in this case would lead them to it,) as deny that a reformed Pastor has power to ordain, because he is not a Bishop. He has Episcopal ordination, even such as the canons require, being set apart by two or three Pastors at least, who are as truly diocesans as the ancient Bishops, for some whole ages.”(h)

2. And it would be to sustain the absurdity of Apostolical Succession; a theory which has been exposed frequently, and like Baptismal Regeneration, is with singular inconsistency renounced by many eminent Episcopalians, who yet act on the principle by excluding Ministers of other denominations from their pulpits. (i) A theory which is such a palpable fiction of Romanism that it would seem impossible for any candid Protestant to treat it with respect. “A theory,” says Macaulay, which is this, “that each Bishop, from the apostolic times, has received in his consecration a mysterious ‘gift,’ and also transmits to every Priest in his ordination a mysterious ‘gift,’ indicated in the respective offices, by the awful words, ‘Receive

(h) Prim. Episc., p. 183. (i) See Whately's Kingdom of Christ, pp. 182-188.

the Holy Ghost;' that on this the right of Priests to assume their function, and the preternatural grace of the sacraments administered by them, depends; that Bishops, once consecrated, instantly become a sort of Leyden jar of spiritual electricity, and are invested with the remarkable property of transmitting the 'gift' to others; that this has been the case from the primitive age till now; that this high gift has been incorruptibly transmitted through the hands of impure, profligate, heretical ecclesiastics, as ignorant and flagitious as any of their lay contemporaries; that, in fact, these 'gifts' are perfectly irrespective of the moral character and qualifications both of Bishop and Priest, and reside in equal integrity in a Bonner or in a Cranmer; a parson Adams or a parson Trulliber." (j)

(j) Edin. Rev. Apr. 1843.

REASON VI.

THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH IS NOW IN EXISTENCE
WITH LEGITIMATE CLAIMS.

THERE are other and minor reasons why I cannot be an Episcopalian; as for instance, the Romish observance of days, the formalities of worship, Priestly and Episcopal vestments, Rochets, Gowns and Surplices, and their changes, so unlike the simplicity of apostolic customs, the appellation "Priest" applied to Pastors, an abuse condemned by the New Testament, in which Christ is the only Priest, and which betrays its Romish origin by squinting hardly at the impieties of the mass.

These are with me, however, inferior matters, I therefore do not insist on them, but at once give my last reason why I am not an Episcopalian, which is, that I FIND THE CHURCH ORGANIZED BY THE APOSTLES NOW EXISTING, AND I HOLD IT MY BOUNDEN DUTY TO SUSTAIN IT.

1. The apostolic Churches consisted of baptized believers. "*Then they that gladly re-*

ceived his word were baptized: and the same day there were *added unto them* about three thousand souls." (*k*) This is said to be "adding to the Church,"—"And the Lord *added to the Church* daily such as should be saved." (*l*) "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women;" (*m*) "But *when they believed* Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, *they were baptized* both men and women." (*n*)

I do not here design to enter into the baptismal controversy. God certainly cannot have given a command which is difficult to comprehend; and, though volumes have been written and thus embarrassed the Scriptures, if my reader will consult the New Testament, he will, I conceive, agree with the author of Lacon, that "were a plain man to read the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles without note or comment, it would never enter into his heart to conceive the purport of many ideas signified by words ending in *ism*, which nevertheless have cost Christendom rivers of ink and oceans

(*k*) Acts ii. 41. (*l*) Acts ii. 47. (*m*) Acts v. 14. (*n*) Acts viii. 12.

of blood." I shall only submit a thought or two.

1. Does not the very commission shut out the idea of infant baptism? "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized," &c. Now let it never be forgotten that this is *the only authority under which any one can baptize*, and I inquire candidly, Does this authorize the baptism of any but believers? Open any Pedobaptist work addressed to parents, and how certainly do you find them exhorted "to bring their children to the font" with a great deal about "covenant mercies," &c. Is it (I do not say probable, but) *possible* that in the Bible designed for all ages and for *Pagans* as well as *Jews*, there should be such minute addresses as to the duty of parents to their children, and yet not one word, not one instance, supporting infant baptism? The only plausible argument I ever saw for the practice is from the Abrahamic covenant of Circumcision; but,

2. Is it not an ample refutation of this plea, that the Abrahamic rite was restricted to one sex, and extended to all servants bought by a Jew without reference to age or character?

Would any one now so restrict baptism? Would any one so extend it, and baptize the slaves bought by a master simply *on the ground that they were his servants*, and although they were notoriously wicked? If not, then the Jewish Congregation into which persons were admitted by circumcision, was not a body like the Christian Church into which baptism initiates.

(3.) Moreover, even if the argument from the Abrahamic covenant of Circumcision holds, still children ought to be circumcised, not baptized. Baptism has not come in the room of circumcision. Both are positive institutions; and the substitution of one for the other requires, therefore, a positive order. But, what is demonstratively conclusive here, is, *that the Jewish converts continued in the Apostles' days to circumcise their children*. This rite belonged to them as Jews, and they, therefore, did not discontinue it. In Acts ch. xxi. 21, we find that when Paul came to Rome, the Jewish converts alleged as a criminal charge against him, that he had taught the Jews who were among the Gentiles, "not to circumcise their children." Now could this charge have been made, if circumcision had been supplanted by

baptism? And would not Paul at once have said, "Yes, I have so taught, because baptism is come in the place of circumcision?" Instead of this, he plainly treats the charge as a slander, and takes measures to refute it. "And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord; and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: *And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.* What is it, therefore? The multitudes must needs come together, for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know, that those things, *whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.** As touching the Gentiles which

* In Acts xvi. we read that he circumcised Timothy, who was a Jew by the mother's side, sometime after he

believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing." (o) In Acts xv., we find that some Jewish converts taught even the Gentiles that they should be circumcised; and this occasioned great discussion, and caused the consultation of the Apostles. Could this difference of opinion have existed, if God had taught the Apostles that baptism was in the room of circumcision, and would not the Council of Apostles have said so? But they evidently were of a different opinion, and decided that

was baptized. He would not, however, allow the rite to Titus, who was a Greek.—Galat. ii. 3. The dissimulation of Peter and Barnabas and other Hebrews, (Galat. ii. 12, 13, 14, will satisfy any one, that the thought of baptism as a substitute for circumcision, was unheard of in the Apostles' days. Peter and his companions lived in intimacy with the baptized Gentiles for some time; but when certain Jewish Christians arrived, they withdrew and "separated themselves, fearing them which were of the Circumcision." This was unworthy timidity and duplicity, since Peter knew that in the Christian Church there was no difference between Gentile and Jew. It proves, however, not only that circumcision was still practiced, but so highly esteemed by Jewish converts, that an Apostle shrank from the odium to which he had exposed himself, by associating on a footing of equality, with those who had not this mark, *although they were baptized.*

(o) Acts xxi. 20-25.

(while the Jewish converts ought to continue the Abrahamic rite) it was not required of the Gentiles. Neander, the ablest writer of Church History who ever lived, and not a Baptist, says: "How could he (Paul,) have set up infant baptism against the circumcision that continued to be practised by the Jewish Christians? In this case, the dispute carried on with the Judaizing party, on the necessity of circumcision, would easily have given an opportunity of introducing this substitute into the controversy, if it had really existed." (*p*) That in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul declares the Mosaic ceremonies abolished, has nothing to do with this matter, for the Mosaic ritual was not the Abrahamic covenant.

2. The *baptism of the New Testament is immersion*. On this point, the learned Bossuet, a Roman Catholic, says: "John's baptism was performed by plunging. In fine, we read not in the Scripture, that baptism was otherwise administered; and we are able to make it appear by the acts of councils, and by the ancient rituals, that for thirteen hundred

(*p*) See Plant. of Ch. p. 102.—See this whole masterly argument as to the subjects and mode of baptism, in which his learning and intellect are only surpassed by his candor.

years, baptism was thus administered throughout the whole Church as far as was possible."

The truth is, the word means "*immerse*," and nothing else, as the reader will see by consulting any good Lexicon. That it is sometimes figuratively used, to convey the idea of steeping in an abundance of any element, is admitted. Such instances are found in Greek poetry; and in the Bible, Christians are said to be "*baptized in the Holy Ghost*," (q) intimating, in strong eastern style, their being wholly surrounded and imbued with his influences. But in these cases the very force of the metaphor is derived from this that the proper import of the phrase is immerse. The English terms "plunge" and "dip" are employed in the same way. Thus we say "*Plunged in grief*;" Milton says (in *Comus*)

———"a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o'er."

And Shakspeare says (in *Hamlet*)

"What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would *drown* the stage with tears."

(q) Such is the original; in every case the Greek is "baptize *in* water" "*in* the Holy Ghost," not "with."

All feel, however, that, in examining the meaning of a law, it is trifling to go to poets and their metaphors. I shall, therefore, not argue this matter, but simply submit to the reader, whether he can have any sort of doubt what baptism is, with the plain declarations of God's word before him? Take this passage—"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized went up straightway *out of the water.*"(r) Take this, "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the Eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said; *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayst.* And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both *into the water*, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they

(r) Matt. iii. 13, 14, 15, 16.

were come up *out of the water*, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." (s) Take this, "And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was *much water* there;" (t) And not to multiply passages, take this, "Know ye not, that *so many of us as were baptized* into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are *buried with him by baptism* into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been *planted* together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." (u) Now, I enquire, are these passages (translated, too, by Episcopalians,) doubtful? Every respectable commentator confesses the last quotation wholly without meaning, unless the word signifies immerse.

Doddridge, (Independent,) "'Buried with him in baptism.' It seems the part of candor to confess, that here is an allusion to the manner of baptizing by immersion."

(s) Acts viii. 36, 37, 38, 39. (t) John iii. 23. (u) Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5.

John Wesley, (Methodist,) “ ‘Buried with him,’ alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion.”

Whitby, (Episcopalian,) author of a Commentary on the New Testament, and more than forty other learned works. “It being so expressly declared here, Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12, that we are buried with Christ in baptism, by being buried under water; and the argument to oblige us to a conformity to his death, by dying to sin, being taken hence; and this immersion being religiously observed by all Christians for thirteen centuries, and approved by our Church, and the change of it into sprinkling, even without any allowance from the author of this institution, or any license from any council of the Church, being that which the Romanist still urges to justify his refusal of the cup to the laity; it were to be wished that this custom might be again of general use, and aspersion only permitted, as of old in case of the Clinici, or in present danger of death.”

Dr. Chalmers, on this text, says, “The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion, and though we regard it as a point of indifferency, whether the ordinance so named be

performed in this way or by sprinkling, yet we doubt not that the prevalent style of administration in the Apostle's days, was by an actual submerging of the whole body under water."(*v*)

Archbishop Tillotson: "Anciently those who were baptized were immersed and buried in water, to represent their death to sin; and then did rise up out of the water, to signify their entrance upon a new life."(*w*)

Indeed, only adopt any other signification, say '*poured*,' and how will it read? "Know ye not that so many of us as were *poured* into Jesus Christ were *poured* into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by *pouring* into death!" Or let us try "*sprinkled*." "Know ye not that so many of us as were *sprinkled* into Jesus Christ, were *sprinkled* into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by *sprinkling* into death!" It is certain, then, this verse requires immersion; but note, the Apostle here declares *that all who are baptized are so buried*.

3. Lastly, the popular form of government; the simplicity of worship; the orders of Presbyter (called Pastor or Bishop when having

charge of a Church,) and Deacon; (an officer having supervision of the temporal concerns of the Church,) I find in that body to which I belong. And, while I love many who differ from me, and respect most devoutly their right of private judgment, yet, as I love Christ more, and am soon to answer to him, I dare not throw my little influence in favor of any other Church, and in opposition to that which I believe is striving to preserve in all things, the doctrines and usages embodied in the Scriptures.

These remarks, reader, I now leave with you, praying that God will lead, and guide, and bless you for Jesus' sake; and entreating you to remember the admonitions, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (x) "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven." (y) Jesus Christ "being made perfect, became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (z)

(x) John xv. 14. (y) Matt. vii. 21. (z) Heb. v. 9.

BAPTISTS NOT EXCLUSIVE.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:

My attention has been called to a recent publication of yours, entitled, "Exclusivism." Prompted by motives whose purity is cheerfully conceded, and written in a frank and fearless spirit, it, nevertheless, abounds in statements of the views and policy of Baptists which, if well founded, should insure for them the honest reprobation of all Christian men.

The previous publication of the document in the pages of a denominational review, might not have necessitated a reply; but, its appearance in this community in pamphlet form; its currency in our congregations, and even in our

Sabbath Schools; and above all, its authority, by virtue of the weight of learning and piety which so justly accompanies your name, have laid this necessity upon us; unless, indeed, we acknowledge the justice of your statements, and consign our views, our policy, and our history, to well merited scorn. ✎

My object in addressing you is not controversy—hardly defence of the acknowledged principles of Baptists—but rather to plead “not guilty,” to the new and flagrant accusations of your pamphlet. We do you the justice to believe that, if you have mistaken our opinions in little or in much, you desire that the mistake should be corrected, and the injury, if possible, repaired.

That the whole matter may be clearly before us, I submit some portions of your pamphlet, of which as Baptists we complain.

[3] “Besides the Roman Catholics, there are three denominations of Christians in this country that unite with them in excluding all others. They are the Episcopalians, the Baptists, and some portions of the asteroidal fragments of the Scotch Presbyterian church.”

[6] “None of the members of other churches are recognized by the Baptists churches as true

members of the Church of Christ, however sound they may be in the faith, however pure and holy in their walk; however zealous and eminent they may be in spreading the gospel around the world."

[11] "No persons are admitted to their communion on certificate from other churches, unless they first practically disown their former membership by being immersed at the hands of a Baptist minister. If there are any exceptions to these cases, they are manifestly a violation of the principles held by the Baptist denomination, and are utterly inconsistent with the main doctrine which they hold on the subject of the organization of the church of Christ."

[14] "Here, we have in this nineteenth century and in this Protestant land, a most remarkable fact. Here are three denominations of Christians, with no common bond of union, with no sympathy of doctrine, with no recognition of each other, as exclusive in regard to each other as they are in regard to other denominations, which, deliberately, and on principle, arrogate to themselves whatever there is of sanctity and of influence in being in possession of a true ministry or of valid sacraments, and which as deliberately leave each other, and all others, to the 'uncovenanted mercies of God.'"

[15] "It may be important, therefore, to inquire what pretension or claim each of these denominations may have respectively to judge for the rest of mankind, and to assume a position so exclusive and so arrogant in its bearings."

[17] "We have no desire to depreciate the character or the influence of the Baptist denomination. We are under no temptations, and have no

mersed, and that the blessings of the covenant descend *only* on those whose children are not baptized. It is difficult, indeed, to see that these ideas, superadded to the ancient notions of Christianity, have in fact contributed anything to promote the essential progress of the Church on earth, in respect to the conversion of sinners, or to the holiness and intelligence of believers; nor can any one show *how* these additions to what had been for ages understood to be the essential doctrines of Christianity have originated any new motives in spreading religion, or furnished any new power in overcoming the opposition of the human heart to the Gospel of Christ. Nor can we see in what way the influence of these superadded ideas, whatever respectability the Baptist denomination has in regard to numbers, to learning, or to piety, has contributed to place the denomination on so exalted an elevation that it can look down on all others that bear the Christian name, and give them a right to exclude them from all claim to a place in the Church of Christ. And yet, this denomination, on no other ground than this new conception in regard to baptism, feels itself authorized to judge of the relation of three-fourths of the people of this land to Christianity; to withhold fellowship from all other professed Christians, however pure, zealous, or consistent in their lives; and practically to take the position before the world that none of those who for fifteen hundred years from the time of the Saviour professed his name, and who in times of peace and of conflict—by personal sacrifices and by severe toil—in prisons and on racks, and in the fires of martyrdom—showed

wish to undervalue their zeal, their ability, their learning, and their piety. But the question now is, What claim have the Baptists to the position which they assume, that they are the only true Church in the land,—that none are entitled to the privileges of the Church of Christ except those who are connected with their denomination? On what ground is it that they practically and constantly assert, that, though other men may preach, no others may celebrate the Redeemer's death but those who have been baptized at their hands? As a denomination, they are but of yesterday. We go but a little way back in history till we come to a point when, if their theory is correct, there *was* no true Church on the earth. There is as little in their origin to be proud of as there is in the origin of *any* organization, civil or ecclesiastical, that has from a humble beginning worked its way into respectability. It *has* reached a respectable, an honorable, and an influential position in the world, and it is to be among the permanent arrangements for securing the spread of the Gospel on the earth; but it has not as a foundation for its exclusiveness even the poor pretension of the Episcopalians, that it can trace its history back to the Apostolic times; for there *were* times—and those not far remote in the history of the world—when the Baptist denomination was *not*. For more than three-fourths of the history of the Church on the earth, Christianity has made its way somehow among the nations,—converting sinners, overthrowing idolatry, diffusing knowledge, establishing colleges and schools, comforting the afflicted and sustaining the dying—*without* the Baptist idea that men must be im-

the power of religion, and spread it through the world, had any claim of membership in the Christian Church; and that if they had lived in these times, the most holy and zealous of them all could not have been admitted to the communion table of the obscurest Baptist society of this land. And, as compared with other Churches on the score of talent, learning, zeal, piety, *have* the Baptist churches any such eminence as to authorize them to ignore all others, and to assume that the members of the other Churches can have no right to sit down at the table of the Lord?"

[21] "Thus these three denominations stand alike apart from each other, and from all the other churches of the land. No one of the three recognizes either of the others; no one of them recognizes any other church as having any claim to be regarded as a part of the true Church of Christ. Widely separated from each other, and each disowning the other, they unite in *unchurching* all others, and in a practical proclamation that all the other professed Christians of the land are left to the uncovenanted mercies of God. Each also in a state of direct and avowed antagonism to the Roman communion; each manifesting great zeal against the "mother of harlots," and "the man of sin;" and each regarding the organization of that communion as one of the master works of Satan upon earth, yet all unite *with* that communion in one of its most offensive features, in claiming to be the only true church, and in denying to every other church all claim to be regarded as a part of the redeemed body of Christ."

[22] "Can this be Christianity? Will this meet the approbation of Him who died to redeem the whole Church to himself?"

[27] "If any one mode of church organization has been *prescribed* in the New Testament, we do not see how there can be any other that is to be recognized as entitled to the name of a *Church*."

"There is, however, no such prescribed form of Church organization in the New Testament. There is no one form so clearly specified as to give to any one class of Christians a right to exclude others from a claim to be recognized as a part of the true Church of Christ. This, to our minds, is perfectly clear; and we do not see how it can be doubted by any one who looks candidly and impartially at the subject. Nothing is more certain than that, in respect to this point, it has never been possible to *prove* that any one form, either of baptism or Church government has been so prescribed in the New Testament as to exclude all others. Men equally learned, equally pious, equally eminent in talent, and equally useful, have embraced different views on the subject of the organization of the Church, and the modes and forms of worship."

[34] "To justify such exclusivism, it is absolutely necessary to be able to prove that one form, and one only, is prescribed in the Scriptures; a work which never has been done, and which never can be done, any more than that it can be demonstrated by a monarchist, a republican, or an oligarchist, that his own form of civil administration is prescribed in the Bible as the only one under which civil government may be lawfully administered among men."

[56] "In the conclusion of our remarks, therefore, and as expressing the sum of all that we have said, we would observe that there are two things which are essential to proper notions of the union of the church; two things which are indispensable in overcoming the exclusive spirit which now prevails in the branches of the church to which we have referred; two things which we have a right to insist on and demand, and which we do insist on and demand, in reference to each and every denomination; two things to which the whole church must ultimately come. They are these: first, that it shall be understood that there is to be entire *freedom* in the church in forming denominations, and in individual Christians attaching themselves to such existing denominations as they may prefer, without any disparagement, or implying any suspicion in regard to their good standing in the Church of Christ; and second, that there shall be a mutual recognition in the different evangelical denominations of each other—a recognition of the membership, of the ministry, and of the validity of the sacraments as administered by each other."

[57] "I. Perfect freedom among Christians in forming denominations according to their preferences, or their views in regard to worship and doctrine; and in attaching themselves to such denominations as they may choose.

[60] "II. The second thing we demand and claim as following from our argument; as essential to the proper unity of the church, and as lying at the basis of all negotiations in regard to the union of the different denominations—a *sine qua non* in

any attempt to promote such union—is, that in the evangelical denominations there shall be a recognition of the ministry, membership, and sacraments of each other.

“ We claim this on these grounds :

“(a) As a *right*, based on the fact that no one form of church organization can be proved to be prescribed in the New Testament as essential to the idea of a church ; that no one mode of baptism has been specified as the only mode ; that it is impossible to demonstrate that any prelatical ministry is in a direct and uncontaminated line from the Apostles ; that no creed now embraced as that which expresses the peculiar views of any one of the existing denominations can be demonstrated to be that within which alone lie the hopes and offers of salvation ; and that no one can adduce any authority from the Bible to *exclude* any others who give evidence that they are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and are true believers in Christ, from any or all of the privileges and the acts of recognition due to those who are redeemed, and are the heirs of heaven. We claim and demand this on the broad ground, that whoever gives evidence that he is accepted of the Father, as reconciled through the Son, is a member of the one true Catholic Church, and should be in every way recognized as such in the great family of the Christian brotherhood. He that excludes one whom Christ has not excluded ; he who shuts out one whom Christ has not shut out ; he who in word or act holds up one whom Christ has received and recognized as entitled to the crown of glory, as a schismatic or a heretic, an

alien or an outcast, offers a direct affront to Christ himself, and, so far as the act goes, renounces the Saviour also."

[64] "The objection—the difficulty—is, that they exclude and denounce each other; that one portion refuses to recognize another portion as any part of the true church; that one portion, claiming peculiar sanctity, or relying on a pretended exclusive authority derived from the Apostles, represents another as 'left to the uncovenanted mercies of God;' that one portion, on the ground of an external rite, excludes all others from a public recognition as having any claim to the title of Christians; and that another, on the ground that they only are in possession of the truth, exclude all others from any right to the communion."

[66] "We claim and demand of the Baptists, that they shall not merely recognize the ministry of other denominations, but their membership also; that while, if they prefer it, they continue the practice of immersion in baptism as a part of their Christian liberty, they shall concede the same liberty to others; and while they expect that *their* acts of baptism shall be recognized by others as valid, they shall not offer an affront to the Christian world by re-baptizing all who enter their communion, or by excluding from their communion all who have not been subjected to the right of immersion." "Of each and all these denominations of Protestant Christians we claim and demand that they shall not offer this public affront to the Christian world, that all others but themselves are to be classed, so far as their act can go, and so

far as they can have any influence with aliens and apostates ; Saracens and sceptics ; Brahminists and Buddhists—shut out from any *covenant* mercy, and any *promise* of heaven.”

[74] “And for similar reasons we claim and demand of the Baptist Churches that they shall recognize the members of other churches, *as* members of the Church of Christ. We do not ask this as a boon, we claim it as a right. We do not come and present a humble petition that this *may* be so ; we insist that, in all good faith, it *shall* be so. We claim it on the ground that all the members of the redeemed church are equal before God, and are equal in their rights on the earth ; on the ground that other Christians are not inferior in the evidence of piety, in zeal, in learning, in usefulness, and in the proofs of the Master’s favor ; on the ground that Baptists have no claim from their origin or their history to pre-eminence or exclusivism ; on the ground that they can never so demonstrate from the Bible that immersion is the *only* mode of baptism that will be acceptable to God, as to be a satisfactory argument to any candid and reasonable man outside of their own communion ; on the ground that they can never demonstrate from Scripture that Christians have a right to give to *any* ordinance of religion—any mere rite or ceremony, and especially any mode of performing a rite or ceremony—such a prominence as to override all other distinctions, and to constitute the peculiar rule of judging of other men ; on the ground that they can never demonstrate that the question about the qualification for membership in the Christian Church depends on the quantity of water that

shall be used in baptism. We care not how much water any body of Christians may use, though they should insist that for themselves they prefer to be laved in the Atlantic ocean to being immersed in the Jordan; or prefer being immersec in the Jordan to being washed in 'Onion river;' or should prefer being washed in Onion river to being immersed in a baptistry in Sansom street or in Spruce street.* Let them enjoy this privilege, if they deem it a privilege; but let them not exalt this to a position to which Christ has not exalted it, or make that a test of character and of a title to heaven, when Christ has made repentance and faith in himself the only ground of being recognized as his followers all over the world."

* The celebrated Lemuel Haines was riding with a Baptist brother, when they came to a certain river. "See," said the Baptist brother, "brother Haines, here is water. What doth hinder you from going down into the Jordan?" "Brother," replied Mr. Haines, "that is not the Jordan, it is Onion river."

These extracts are quoted in the order of the pages in which they occur. They comprise nearly all in your pamphlet which relate to Baptists. I am not aware that any one of them is so wrested from its connection as to suffer in its meaning, or so separated from mollifying clauses as to increase its seve

urity. There is but little balm in the pamphlet; doubtless it was intended to cure, but mainly by the lancet and the scalpel.

These extracts may be classified into charges, admissions, and claims. In the order of the pamphlet they are intermingled. We find charges among claims, claims among charges, and admissions among both. It is mainly to the charges and claims that your attention is invited. The admissions may be serviceable as we proceed.

The charges are of two classes. They arraign our practice and our history. The first in order are those relating to our practice.

You charge us with "deliberately and on principle," arrogating to ourselves "whatever there is of sanctity and of influence, in being in possession of a *true ministry* and of *valid sacraments*." Page 14.

With refusing to recognize the members of other Churches as "*true members of the Church of Christ*." Page 6.

With excluding "all others from a public recognition as having any claim to the title of *Christian*." Page 64.

With classing all others but ourselves, so

far as our acts can go, and so far as we have any influence “with *aliens and apostates, Saracens and sceptics, Brahminists and Buddhists, shut out from any covenanted mercy, and any promise of heaven.*” Page 66. And then, as if condensing all these offences into one, you charge us with uniting with the Roman Catholic communion, “in one of its most offensive features—in claiming to be the only true Church, and denying to every other Church, all claim to be regarded as a part of the *redeemed body of Christ.*” Page 21.

These are not stated as inferences springing from our views; they are your statements of the views themselves. Such inferences occur in the pamphlet; but I have carefully distinguished them from statements, and omitted them in the list of charges.

These charges are very serious ones; more serious than have been urged against us of late, by any writer of distinction. Casting reproach, as they do, upon the opinions, (and I may add, the character) of a large denomination of Christians, it is but fair to suppose that every sentence was deliberately written, and every word was carefully chosen. I

should do you injustice were I to suppose the contrary. It is taken for granted, that you have worded these statements with precision, after diligent study of the facts. The question is, how far these statements are correct?

Do Baptists “deliberately and on principle, arrogate to themselves whatever there is of sanctity and of influence, in being in possession of a *true ministry* and of *valid sacraments*?” The language is strong. To “arrogate” is to claim proudly and falsely. Crabb, in his English Synonymes, defines arrogance as a species of “moral usurpation;” and an arrogant temper, as “one of the most odious features in the human character;” “a compound of folly and insolence.”

Do we thus, proudly and falsely, claim a sanctity and influence which is not our own? You will, doubtless, admit that sanctity and influence may justly cling to a true ministry and valid sacraments. That ours is a true ministry, and ours are valid sacraments, is also admitted by the whole tenor of your pamphlet. The charge of “arrogance” then, can be sustained only by the supposition of an *exclusive* claim by us to this sanctity and

influence, in virtue of an alleged *exclusive* possession of a true ministry, and of valid sacraments.

Do we set up such a claim? That we do not, in relation to the *ministry*, is admitted elsewhere in your pamphlet. You say of us: "So far as we know, they do not hesitate in any way, to recognize the ministers of the Gospel of other denominations as entirely on a level with their own ministers." Page 12. You even complain of inconsistency in our recognizing as *ministers*, those whom we do not receive as *communicants*. Why then do you charge us with arrogating to ourselves whatever of sanctity or of influence there is in being in possession of a true ministry. Perhaps the admission, although in another connection, was intended to modify the charge. If so, I submit that the ointment is too far from the bruise. If a physician should leave such space between a bane and its antidote, his patient would die in the interim. Or perhaps you found the charge upon the fact that ministers of some denominations are not invited to our communion. If so, while I waive for the present all defence of our re-

stricted communion, I must be permitted to remind you that an exclusive claim to the possession of a true ministry is one thing, and not inviting the ministers of other denominations to leave their own communion table and partake at ours, is quite another thing.

But do we lay exclusive claim to the possession of valid *sacraments*? By sacraments I suppose you mean the ordinances of Baptism and the Lords Supper. We regard these as a rich provision of the New Testament. Patent as the open page of inspiration, they are ready for the rightful use of all believers. We do not claim the custody of these ordinances; still less do we claim the exclusive "*possession*" of them. To all our brethren we say, there they are—use them. We claim no monopoly; neither sanctity nor sacraments belong to us; we ask but that share of each which falls to our lot as believers. Pray where is the "arrogance" of this?

Nor are we left to the exclusive *use* of them. With regard to Baptism, by which is meant always immersion on a profession of faith in Christ, it is administered in other denominations, and we freely admit its validity.

Henry Ward Beecher's candidates are truly baptized. Baptism as administered by our Episcopalian brethren, who sometimes use our baptistries in this city, and are now building one of their own, is regarded as valid. Any one thus baptized if applying for membership in one of our Churches would be received upon such a baptism. You are mistaken in the statement of your pamphlet that we do not regard Baptism as valid, unless administered "at the hands of a Baptist Minister." This opinion has been urged among us, but has always been resisted as an error. Roger Williams and William Holliman, baptized each other. If it were essential to the validity of Baptism that it should be administered by a baptized person, plainly neither of these baptisms were valid; and many succeeding baptisms would be invalidated. The theory involves an apostolical succession, and is not to be found in our confessions of faith. Plainly then we are not left to the exclusive use of this ordinance, still less to an exclusive "possession." If all our brethren should claim a share in this possession, we would welcome them to their scriptural rights. Far be

it from us to deny to any believer a believer's baptism. Where, then, is the arrogance?

Nor is it different in relation to the supper. It is the Lord's table, and not ours. It is spread for the rightful use of all his children. The rules which govern it are sufficiently clear in the New Testament. We hold ourselves accountable to them in our administration of the ordinance. We leave our brethern to a common privilege, and a like accountability. They may differ from us in their view of what constitutes a scriptural preparation; we may not be able to agree with them; but is this claiming an exclusive possession of the ordinance?

It might be interesting to consider how far neglect of scriptural pre-requisites could "invalidate" the Supper; but if all our brethren should so neglect these pre-requisites, as to rob the table of its blessedness, I do not see that they could charge *us* with arrogating to ourselves its sanctity. It is not our arrogance, but their neglect. If their supper is not valid, they have only to make it so. Where then is the arrogance? But I am not prepared to concede that as a denomina-

tion, we have ever denied the validity of the Supper, as administered by our Pedo-Baptist brethren. If we have, it has escaped my notice. The point is new, and in the absence of any formal expression of opinion which might serve me as a guide, I can speak only for myself. My own view would be that as baptism scripturally precedes communion, our brethren partake *prematurely*. I should distinguish between utter neglect of Baptism, and a mistake as to what constitutes Baptism, and give them the benefit of the distinction. I could admit that despite their mistake, though an important one, they may receive substantial benefits from the Supper. The error is a lack of Baptism, and I could not endorse it by inviting them to our communion; but if they sincerely hold the error, I do not see how they would atone for a mutilated Baptism by an abandonment of the Supper.

Whether in any of these views we are censurable it is not my purpose to consider, but simply to ask if they furnish an adequate foundation for the charge of "deliberately and on principle, arrogating to ourselves whatever of sanctity and of influence there is in being in

possession of a true ministry and of valid sacraments? How then shall the charge be maintained?

Passing now to the second of your charges, let me ask: Do Baptists “refuse to recognize the members of other Churches as *true members of the Church of Christ?*”

In considering this question everything depends upon what you mean by the “*Church of Christ.*” Here you have not left us in doubt. Your definition is as follows:—“The Church is *one*, not in the sense that it is *one* Episcopal Church, or *one* Presbyterian Church, or *one* Baptist Church; it is one in the sense that there is on the earth one great body of believers in Jesus Christ, who have been redeemed by his blood, and who will ultimately be received into heaven. *All who have been thus redeemed, and who will thus through his blood be received into heaven, are true members of the Church; and together they constitute the total Church of Christ on earth.*”

Page 62.

With equal clearness you declare, “that whoever gives evidence that he is accepted of the Father, as reconciled through the Son, is

a member of the one true Catholic Church.'
Page 60.

That such is your use of the terms, is also manifest from the fact, that the rebuke which you administer to our alleged exclusivisms involves the necessity of such a meaning. For you say: "He that excludes one whom Christ has not excluded; he who shuts out one whom Christ has not shut out; he who in word or act holds up one, whom Christ has received and recognized as entitled to the crown of glory, as a schismatic or a heretic, an alien or an outcast, offers a direct affront to Christ himself, and so far as the act goes, renounces also the Saviour." Page 60.

Other portions of your pamphlet involve this definition. In the last of the charges enumerated you say, that we deny "to every other church all claim to be regarded as a part of the *redeemed body of Christ*." The charge we are considering with the definition of its meaning now given, would be but tantamount to this. Henceforth they may be treated as one. The third also favors the theory. In that you charge us with excluding "all others from a public recognition as

having any claim to the title of *Christian*." The fourth is clear and conclusive, for there we are made to cast out all others, with a motley throng of unredeemed apostates, shut out from any covenanted mercy, and any promise of heaven! These also may be blended with the first in our future consideration.

Thus these four charges, varying in form, but lending to each other a painful certainty of meaning, amount to this, that Baptists do not recognize the members of other churches as *Christians*; that they not only deny them the *name* of Christian, but class them with the *unconverted*, not to say "Heathen" world, "shut out" from all "covenanted mercy," and every "promise of heaven."

It is true, there is a sentence of your pamphlet which falls like a ray of hope on these poor outcasts. You say, as if admitted by us, "They may, indeed, be Christians, and may be saved." But the slenderness of the "may" appears in a following paragraph, where, in allusion to just such uncovenanted ones, you continue, "but so *may* also the inhabitants of the Fejee Islands, though cannibals; so *may* the howl

ing, torturing, scalping, bloody American savage. There is no pledge in the one case more than in the other; in either case, the only hope is that of mercy outside of any arrangement which God has made in his Church for the salvation of men."

If guilty of the great wrong you ascribe to us, we should not look so despairingly on these exiles from "covenants" and "arrangements." I am not much versed in covenants. As Baptists, we make but little of "arrangements." But if by covenant is meant, God's pledge of safety to his children, then we link it to no earthly arrangements, mould it into no visible forms, but believe that wherever the suppliant may kneel—on Christian or on heathen ground—in nave or chancel—by the dusty path of travel, or on the storm-washed deck—His ear is open to their cry. Or down below the wave—below the fish—down where the sailor, in his agony, clutches at the "green light"—even there God's covenant enfolds him, and the promise of heaven is his.

But do we thus cast out our brethren? Our denominational literature is before you; in

which of our writings do you find it? Our churches abound in this community and around 't—which of them hold it? Our ministers mingle freely with your own—which of them teaches or believes it? Our laymen are associated with yours, they live in the same streets, worship often at the same altars, strike hands in the same works of love—which of them treats his brother of a different denomination as an outcast from Christ? If such a man can be found, I would almost consent to give another Baptist to the whipping-post. If we have such a minister, let him hear the words which were rung in the ears of our first preacher at Haverhill, warning him “off of God’s earth.” If we have one such church, nail up the doors of its meeting-house, as the Pede-Baptist authorities of New England nailed up the doors of our first meeting-house in Boston. But, sir, on this score at least we should be safe from persecution. Born and bred among Baptists, I never met with one who entertained such views, or knew before that we were suspected of holding them.

But, assigning narrower limits to the Church,

do we refuse to recognize our brethren as members, or the separate organizations into which they are formed as churches?

Perhaps no better definition of a Church could be given, than is contained in the nineteenth article of the Episcopalian creed: "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite for the same."

The definition is not absolute, but relative. Thus, the congregation of "faithful men" may be more or less faithful. The "pure Word of God" may be more or less preached, and the sacraments be "duly ministered" in more or less strict accordance with Christ's ordinance. In proportion as these conditions are perfectly observed in any Church, that Church will approximate to the idea of the New Testament Church. In proportion as any one of them is neglected, it will come short of that idea. Now we do not claim in all these particulars, to be perfect ourselves, and surely we do not demand it of our brethren as essential to their

recognition as churches. We think they are deficient in respect to Baptism, and in some other things besides; but we do not, in consequence, "un-church them." We believe that Baptism is the scriptural mode of admission into a Church; if you please, the door into the Church; but a Church is something more than Baptism, as a house is more than a door; and as a man may enter a house without going in by the door, so a Christian may enter a Church by some other than the scriptural way. It is true his mode of entrance was irregular and disorderly, but still he is in.

Let me suppose a case. You are asked, "What is a house?" You describe it as a building with walls, a roof, windows, doors, and various indoor "arrangements." Now here is a building which answers all the description, except that it is without a door. Instead of this, we have a small round hole into which the inmates creep, Esquimaux fashion. The children go in and out with infinite ease, but it is not so easy for the grown up members of the household. What will you call it? It has the walls, roof, windows and apartments of a house; people live there; if it is not a house, what

is it? We call it a house; a house which would be better for a door, but still a house. So we say of Pedo-Baptist Churches. They are Churches; Churches which would be greatly improved by a more scriptural mode of entrance—one through which a man could walk uprightly—but still Churches; irregular only so far as they fail in rigid adherence to the plan of the Master. Pardon this homely illustration, or take it if you will, as a good-natured offset to your story of “Onion river.”

In addition to the charges enumerated, there are others in your pamphlet which deserve your careful attention; for instance, you charge us with believing “that the blessings of the covenant descend *only* on those whose children are not baptized.” Page 18. It is, also, more than intimated that we exalt Baptism into the place of Repentance and Faith; making it “A test of character, and of a title to heaven.” Page 75.

In support of these, or the enumerated charges, you adduce no proof. We object to them all, as unfounded and unfair. It is a maxim of law that a man shall be held innocent until he is proved to be guilty. This is

equally applicable in the case before us, unless there are facts of whose very existence we are ignorant ourselves, we ask you, as a brother beloved, to withdraw the charges.

We come now to a consideration of your views in relation to our *history*. The point of your approach is this. You inquire "what claim or pretension" we have to assume a position "so exclusive and so arrogant in its bearings." You then examine us in relation to our numbers, our ability, our piety, and our comparative antiquity. As might have been expected, you fail to find in any or all of these a justification of our exclusiveness and arrogance. Not holding the views you ascribe to us, we are not disappointed at the result. But we should decline to rest our real opinions upon the argument from numbers, or ability, or piety even, still less on the argument from antiquity. The *Scriptures*, and the *Scriptures only* are the rule of Baptists. Tried by these, of all Protestant denominations we have least to fear. When we are condemned by the New Testament, we will abide the judgment.

It is a matter of no small surprise to us, that in this examination of our views you turn

so readily from this great Protestant doctrine to such other considerations as would become a traditionary creed. It sadly indicates the tendency of all who receive any thing upon tradition.

In our view, numbers cannot justify an unscriptural practice—ability cannot sanction it—piety cannot atone for it—or time so consecrate it with the dust of centuries, that henceforth we should receive and venerate it. *Sin* is as old as that Eden loveliness whose bloom is blighted; as hoary as that olden world whose doom it sealed; its trail along the ages is as deeply drawn as eye or heart could wish it; yet still a sad, unblest, remorseless thing, despite its age and history—sad as the new-made grave it opens, or the final misery it braves.

If we *were* “but of yesterday”—if there *were* times, and “those not far remote in history, when the Baptist denomination was *not*,” we should still ask, how does this new thing under the sun compare with the Scriptures?

If, perchance, “for more than three-fourths of the history of the Church on the earth,

Christianity had made its way somehow among the nations, converting sinners, overthrowing idolatry, comforting the afflicted, and sustaining the dying, *without* the Baptist idea, that men must be immersed ;” even then we should ask, is this “idea” in the New Testament? If it were, we would welcome the statement, as in praise of our common faith—a new proof of its deathless energy—that marred and mutilated in the house of its friends, it had survived its wounds and pushed the progress of its victories.

But it cannot be admitted that, as a denomination, we are “but of yesterday.” Nor do we think your own theory confirms the conclusion. You find a place even for us in the Scriptures. You admit that our mode of government and Baptism are included in its teachings, and that as a denomination, we “are to be among the permanent arrangements for securing the spread of the Gospel on the earth.” Page 18. Your theory is this, that as no one can mistake the Constitution of Venice ; the idea of an oligarchy being unmistakably impressed upon it ; that as no one can mistake the Constitution of this country, since it

was meant to be republican; so it would have been impossible to mistake the Scriptures, if the Head and Founder of the Church had intended it to be exclusively Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent. Page 29. You reason in the same way in regard to baptism, and conclude, "*That nothing is more certain than that in respect to this point, it has never BEEN POSSIBLE to prove that any one form, either of Baptism or Church government has been so prescribed in the New Testament as to exclude all others.*" Page 27. We have our origin then in the Scriptures, and in good Christian company. Out of these varying forms of government and these diverse baptisms, you assign us ours as fairly included in the general grant. It was intended to establish them *all*, and of course this was made *plain*. But is it not strange, that all these other Baptisms were found out so long ago, and ours only "yesterday." As a denomination we are to be "among the permanent arrangements for securing the spread of the Gospel on the earth," and of course intended to be so; this also would be *plain*. Is it not singular that all the other denominations have existed so

long, no one discovering until recently that God meant *some* to be Baptists?

How is it, "*that none of those who, for fifteen hundred years from the time of the Savior professed his name, could have been admitted, if living in these times, to the communion table of the obscurest Baptist Society in the land.*" Not one Baptist for fifteen hundred years! and yet, as a people, plainly provided for in the Scripture, as "among the permanent arrangements for securing the spread of the Gospel on the earth."

But we are not reduced to an argument like this, founded, as we think, upon a mistaken theory. Nor are we left without what you call "even the poor pretension of the Episcopalian," that we can trace our history back to the apostolic times. As a people, we have been less careful of this tracing than our brethren, for we have had less need. Whatever is *found* in the New Testament is as worthy as if you traced it there. It is only a doubtful practice whose thread must be traced thus carefully through the labyrinth of history with painful uncertainty, lest you reach its end

while yet a century or two from Christ. Why, sir, if between us and the apostolic age there yawned a fathomless abyss, into whose silent darkness intervening history had fallen, with a Baptist Church on this side, and a New Testament on the other, we should boldly bridge the gulf and look for the record of our birth among the hills of Galilee.

But our history is not thus lost. That work is now in progress which will link the Baptists of to-day with the Baptists of Jerusalem. They tell us of our birth at Munster, about three centuries ago. But Munster was a German forest, where the Saxon savage chased the scarce wilder boar, when the Master and his disciples laid the foundation of our history. The blood of that Cæsar, who drove Ariovistus to the Danube, was not yet extinct in the veins of Nero, when Baptists were clustering among the hills of Rome. The fading light of letters and of art still played in lingering beauty on the marble slopes of the Acropolis, when hundreds of Athenian and Corinthian believers were buried with Christ in Baptism. If this was

“yesterday,” then to-morrow when the sun goes down, our earthly toil will end.

That Baptists are of ancient origin, may be seen not only in the Scriptures, but also in ecclesiastical history, imperfectly and partially as it has yet been written. Limborch, Mosheim, Neander, and a host of other Pedit-Baptist writers might be quoted in refutation of the Munster Theory. Within the present century the King of Holland selected his Chaplain, Dr. J. J. Dermont, and Dr. Upeij, Professor of Theology at the University of Groningen, both of the Dutch Reformed Church, to draw up a history of the Dutch Baptists. In the authentic volume which they prepared and published at Breda, in 1819, they arrive at the following deliberate conclusion:—

“We have now seen that the Baptists, who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times, Menonites, were the original Waldenses, and who long in the history of the church, received the honor of that origin. *On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the Apos-*

bles, and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the Gospel through all ages. The perfectly correct external and internal economy of the Baptist denomination tends to confirm the truth, disputed by the Romish Church, that the reformation brought about in the sixteenth century, was in the highest degree necessary, and at the same time goes to refute the erroneous notion of the Catholics that their communion is the most ancient."

Let it be remembered that these learned men were not *Baptists*; that they proclaimed the result of their dilligent research in the ear of a king, who listened unwillingly to their conclusions. Let it also be remembered, that as a result of their investigation the government of Holland offered to the Baptist Churches in the kingdom the support of the State; but true to their principles, they declined it.

Hear also what a Roman Catholic Prelate Cardinal Hosius, President of the Council of Trent, says on this subject, to the Protestants of the Reformation.

"If you behold their cheerfulness in suffering persecution the Anabaptists run *before* all

heretics. If you have regard to their number, *it is likely that in multitude they would swarm above all others if they were not grievously plagued and cut off with the knife of persecution.* If you have an eye to the outward appearance of godliness, both the Lutherans and the Zuinglians must needs grant that they *far pass them.* If you will be moved by the boasting of the word of God, *they* be no less bold than Calvin to preach."

There are other evidences which might be summoned in this connection; but I will not detain you longer at a point of so little importance. It is enough for any of us to be like the New Testament, without tracing our history to New Testament times. It is true we might strengthen and confirm a doctrine by this process if such strength and confirmation were needed. But I regard this work, for a Baptist, as mainly useful by way of pleasant relaxation amid graver cares.

But you find it difficult to see that these Baptist ideas "super-added to the ancient notions of Christianity, have in fact contributed anything to promote the essential progress of the church on earth," and you continue "*nor*

can any one show how these additions to what had been for ages understood to be the essential doctrines of Christianity have originated any new motives in spreading religion, or furnished any new power in overcoming the opposition of the human heart to the Gospel of Christ." Page 19.

Distinguishing carefully between our real opinions and those which are ascribed to us in your pamphlet, it cannot be admitted for a moment that these "Baptist ideas" have been so inoperative or useless. On the contrary the progress of certain great doctrines now almost universally conceded among Evangelical Christians, is interwoven with what you call our "new conception in regard to Baptism."

It has often pleased the Great Disposer of events to stake the trial of a principle upon its minor issues. It was a question of twenty shillings which made the name of Hampden immortal. It was a paltry tax on tea which gave this continent to freedom. Had there been more of sacrifice in concession, there had been less of virtue in the ordeal. Moral victories are gained in *passes*—passes narrow as that be-

tween Mount Æta and the sea. No great calamity *can* come to virtue, but through the undefended gateway of some small neglect; no final peaceful triumph, till you have stopped each crevice in the outer wall.

It has been thus in the church, and especially at this very point of which you speak. From the rise of infant sprinkling, about the middle of the third century, to the present hour, it has been "a twenty shilling tax" in resistance to which the great doctrines of "the Bible and the Bible only as a rule of faith" has been maintained. In our own time the North British Review, the organ of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, concedes that just here the whole contest with the Oxford Tractarians depends. In the number for August, 1852, we find the following: "The non-recognition of the fact that the external rite of infant Baptism is not the Baptism spoken of in the Scriptures, is the source of the palpable weakness of English low churchmen in the discussion of this question. They have reason and religion on their side, but in the appeal to the Scriptures they are invariably worsted by their opponents. No shift will ever help them." I

need not inform you that the defence of infant sprinkling from the New Testament is now abandoned by your ablest scholars. Effort after effort to support it upon Scriptural precepts has signally failed. The best Pedo-Baptist authorities concede this point, but continue to defend the practice. The simple question now *is*—what with Baptists it has always *been*—shall a practice unknown to the Scriptures be received into the church as a sacrament? Concede that it may, and you have given to both Puseyite and Papist the whole question at issue. Without our “new conception” the loop-hole must remain unstopped. *Is* it then or *has* it been so useless?

But again. A departure from the Scriptures, in respect to Baptism, was hardly sanctioned in the Church, when, with the conscious weakness of error, it summoned persecution to its aid. In 413 A. D., Re-baptism, as it was termed, was forbidden throughout the Roman Empire, under penalty of death. In the following year the Council of Carthage, of which Augustine was the President, decided: “We will that whosoever denies that little children, by Baptism, are freed from perdition, and eter-

nally saved, that they be accursed." At an earlier day than this, the same spirit had prevailed, but it was not until the Church received protection of the emperors, that it could display itself in force.

Thus early in the school of persecution, and at the point of their "new conception," did Baptists learn the great principle of soul liberty. That lesson they have never forgotten. Under varying names—in widely distant lands—through long and weary centuries—they have toiled and suffered in its defence. Denied a freedom for themselves, they have answered to the wrong by giving freedom to all mankind. Theirs is a history stained with no blood but their own; lighted by no martyring flames, save those in which their faithful perished. Others have contended as stoutly for their own chosen creed, but none so firmly for the creeds of all. In this they stand alone.

Can you point me to a creed of the Reformation which does not confer upon the magistrate a power in religion? Luther says of false teachers: "I am very averse to the shedding of blood. 'Tis sufficient they should

be banished, or put under restraint as madmen." Neither Melancthon, Bucer, or Beza, can be acquitted of sentiments either similar or worse. And Calvin—would to God the great man's memory were free from the wrongs of Servetus. Cranmer could suffer unto death with heroic firmness for his own faith, but could wring from the tender youth of the reluctant Edward, a warrant for the death of those who differed; a warrant signed in tears, and coupled with a clause like Pilate's.* We "honor the Scotch Churches," and dwell with sadness on the story of their wrongs; but the sufferings they endured were only such as they commended unsparingly to others. John Knox would have burned an adversary of "God's eternal predestination" as coolly as you would drown a kitten. Hear him, in answer to one of those Baptist pleas for soul-liberty which, early in the reign of Elizabeth, was published in Great Britain. Alluding to persecuting Christians, the Baptist writes: "Be these, I pray you, the sheep whom Christ hath sent forth in the midst of

* Hume, vol. iii. p. 353.

wolves. Can the sheep persecute the wolf?" And Knox replies: "I will not now so much labor to confute by my pen, as my full purpose is to lay the same to thy charge, if I shall apprehend thee in any commonwealth where justice against blasphemers may be ministered as God's word requireth."

Nearly a hundred years later, when the Baptists of London had published their sentiments to the world, and when Roger Williams was battling for religious freedom with the Puritans of Massachusetts, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, forbade "*ALL printers in the kingdom* from printing or re-printing *any* confession of faith, or protestation, or reason pro or contra, without warrant, subscribed by the clerk to the Assembly." Four years later, Roman Catholics were ordered to renounce their "obstinacy," under penalty of banishment or imprisonment.

Nor was it different in this western world. Puritans, Churchmen, and Catholics alike joined in persecution. The best example of *toleration* was furnished by the Catholics of Maryland; but *soul liberty* was defended by

Baptists alone. In due time they won some converts; but in Rhode Island, in Massachusetts, in Pennsylvania, in Virginia, and throughout the land, the work was mainly their own. The first Continental Congress had not been ten days in session, when an agent of the Baptists knocked at the door of the old Carpenters' Hall, to ask that freedom of conscience might be given, not to themselves alone, but to all the dwellers in the land.

Well does George Bancroft declare, with a candor which does credit to his mind and heart, "freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of mind, was, from the first, the trophy of the Baptists."* And again. "The party was trodden under foot with foul reproaches and most arrogant scorn; and its history is written in the blood of myriads of the German peasantry; but its principles, safe in their immortality, escaped with Roger Williams to Providence; and his colony is the witness that *naturally* the paths of the Baptists are paths of freedom, pleasantness, and peace."†

* Bancroft, vol. ii. p. 66.

† Ibid., p. 459.

Such testimony is cheering; the more so, from the fact that we are all unused to kindness; yet it is hardly needed by a truth which is wrought into the warp and the woof of our history. The *fact* is indubitable, but its *connection* with our scriptural views of Baptism is often overlooked. Our peculiarities here awakened persecution, and persecution taught us the value of soul liberty.

A similar argument might be urged in relation to other truths. One hundred years ago Baptists stood alone in the defence of a converted Church membership. And here again we were indebted to our "new conception." Infant sprinkling admitted members into the church without even a profession of godliness. Our views of Baptism forbade it. Hence, Baptism became the gate in which men stood to battle for a spiritual Church.

Nor have these "superadded ideas" lost one jot or tittle of their influence, in this or in other lands.

The accuracy of your statement, that Baptists can never convince "any reasonable man, outside of their own communion," may well be doubted, when in this country alone their

additions from the ministers of other denominations, number one for every week in the year, when, from the membership of other Churches, they receive an annual addition of two thousand, besides a yearly increase by conversions of fifty thousand. Well might Neander say: "You Baptists have a future." If, by the blessing of our Heavenly Father, we are humble, prayerful, and severe in our observance of the Scriptures, the saying will be happily fulfilled.

The progress of our principles has not been confined to this country; but in influences originating here, is stretching into other climes. On the Continent of Europe, Baptists are accomplishing a work which it is believed they only can achieve. Twenty-three years ago, our "new conception" was laid at the feet of the world's great preceptress, in science and Philology. In all Germany it had seven followers, and these were formed into a Church at Hamburg. This little solitary Church was "as a city set upon a hill:" alone in the land of Luther, it shone as a beacon on the sea; men saw it, for it shamed the darkness; it was assailed with a virulence which could hardly

be surpassed. Its members were fined, whipped, and imprisoned, but not dismayed; the stars still shone upon their midnight Baptisms, and morning found them at their toil. In all that is beautiful in a gentle spirit, in all that is noble in an earnest faith, I question if this seven have been equalled since the days of the "Twelve." The God of the faithful smiled upon their efforts, and blessed them with signal success. Each member has become a thousand. The field of their labor now stretches from the Rhine to the Vistula, and beyond it to the borders of Russia; from the dike-bound shore of the German ocean, to the slopes of the Carpathian hills. They have entered Denmark; their influence is felt in France. The day is not distant when religious liberty will unfurl her banner in the land of the fourteenth Louis, and above the ashes of a recreant king, and a shameless concubine, the wrongs of the slaughtered Huguenots will be peacefully avenged. A mightier than the wall of Richelieu could not bar the way.

Four years ago, a work on Baptism, which had been published in Philadelphia, found its

way to Sweden. It fell under the eye of a pious and educated minister of the Lutheran Church. He read it; turned from it to the Scriptures; and in a land where fine and imprisonment awaited him, became a Baptist. With the book for his chart he sailed for the city whence it came. On his way, the vessel touched at Copenhagen, and there at midnight, in waters which had felt the keel of Nelson, he was buried with Christ in Baptism. We welcomed him here, and listened with joy to his narration. By his aid we gave a Baptist literature to Sweden; and by a petition drawn in this city, proclaimed in the ear of his prince, the doctrines of religious freedom, for which we have always contended.

Late in the year 1855, in the old church in Sansom street, he was set apart for a mission to his countrymen. In the winter he had crossed the sea. When the ice floes heaved from their rocky anchorage, he had entered on his work of love; when the violet opened on the margin of the fiord, he stood like Peter at the Pentecost, begirt with converts; when the crimson came upon the leaf of the frost-

struck maple, the churches were a score—the members were a thousand.*

Do you ask what all this has to do with the usefulness of our peculiar sentiments? I answer, it has everything to do with them; it is questionable if the work could be accomplished without them. You remark most justly, that it may be impossible to infuse new life into some existing denominations; that new organizations must be built upon their ruins. This is emphatically true of the dead orthodoxy of Europe; and it is not the mission of our Pedo-Baptist brethren to build on its decay. Your unconverted membership excuses theirs. Your practices, exceeding Scripture, involve a principle from which their errors spring. With all your zeal and piety, you can but heal the surface and conceal the wound.

In view of such considerations, I ask if it is so impossible to show that these "*Baptist ideas have originated any new motives in spreading religion, or furnished any new*

* More recent advices from Sweden give twenty-nine churches, and some fourteen hundred members. Four hundred and sixty-nine converts have been baptised since January 1st, 1857.

power in overcoming the opposition of the human heart to the Gospel of Christ?"

We come now to a consideration of the *claims* you urge, as springing from the views of your pamphlet.

With sentiments which preface these claims, we cordially concur. We believe, with you, "that there is a proper love for a denomination, which will be subordinate to a true love of the whole redeemed Church." And we believe "that the time will come when this will be admitted by all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity." We admit there should be, "in things essential, unity; in things not essential, liberty; in all things, charity." We think with you, that religious liberty will prevail in the millennium, and only wonder at the long delay. We would have welcomed our brethren to this stage of millennial glory, at an earlier day; but if their coming is to be so long deferred, we beg to stipulate for indemnity in future persecutions by reason of our avowed neutrality.

In much that follows, we must differ, not so widely in the claims you urge, as the process by which you sustain them.

Your central position is, "that the existence of denominations is not inconsistent with the proper notion of unity, or that it is not in violation of the principles of the New Testament." You regard this as "the first principle;" and on the basis of your argument here, you rest the claims of your conclusion.

Your method of reasoning is this: that the essentials of religion, or things indispensable to salvation, are clearly defined in the Scriptures, that in the things not essential to salvation they leave us at liberty. In your classification of these non-essentials, you enumerate (a,) *forms of government*: (b,) *modes of devotion, and the measures employed in promoting religion in the world*, and (c,) "*even the doctrines of religion.*" Under this last head, you distinguish between doctrines essential to salvation, and those which are not; applying your principle only to the latter. In your illustration of these non-essential doctrines of religion, you dwell mainly if not entirely upon the distinguishing features of the Calvinistic creed, and bring us to the conclusion that here, also, there is liberty.

This classification, although sufficiently com-

comprehensive in one respect, is strikingly deficient in another, since to cover the ground you occupy, it should include at least one of the sacraments. For you assert that in the Scriptures, "no one mode of Baptism has been specified as the only mode." Page 60. You also base a claim on this statement in your conclusion, as if diversity of sacraments were also a part of our permitted freedom. I beg that we may not be cramped in our scriptural liberty. Let us have another item in the classification, which may cover these discretionary sacraments.

In considering this point, it is cheerfully conceded that there are unimportant particulars which the Scriptures do not consider in detail. Some of the particulars which you specify under the head of modes of devotion, as for example, "the hours of prayer," and "the frequency of prayer," are of this description, and yet instruction upon such points will not uncommonly be found, nestling in the germinal folds of some general principle.

It may also be granted that the Scriptures are more full and explicit in their treatment

of some great themes, than in their treatment of others. Their fullness is not always in proportion to importance, since many a truth springs so directly from the life of piety, as to need but little confirmation in the Scriptures.

It may be also conceded that in the study of the Scriptures, there is room for honest differences of opinion. That absolute uniformity in modes of faith is not to be expected upon earth, any more than an absolute uniformity in the nature or condition of men. We agree that men from a variety of causes may differ, and that too in reference to important scriptural truths, and yet love and cherish each other as Christians, toiling unitedly on earth, in hope of still closer union in Heaven.

But this variety of creed is to be located *among men*, and not in the *Scriptures*. It cannot for a moment be admitted that the New Testament, by studied silence or ambiguous responses, provides for diversity in sacraments, or Church governments, much less that it embodies views so dissimilar as those of Augustine or Pelagius. We believe that on all these subjects, the teaching of the New

Testament is clear, and that any departure from these teachings is in violation of its principles. But believing this, we cannot agree with you, that "then there *must* be exclusiveness, and that each denomination or sect which holds such a view, must and should exclude all others from any claim to the Christian name." Page 26. There is still room for honest difference. In the nature of a lofty doctrine like that of the Divine sovereignty, soaring as it does into the very heavens of thought, in a difference of stand point or of medium, by diversity of mental constitution or temperament, we may still account for wide divergency of opinion, without branding either the honesty or the piety of men.

It is doubtless true, as you suggest, that some men are constitutionally inclined to certain modes of faith. A man like Calvin is at home among the Alps of Theology. Along the crumbling verge of shelving cliffs, he moves with an unfaltering tread. Above, the overhanging peaks shut off the sun at midnoon, and anon he passes where straight below his foot-print the distance deepens into nether

darkness. Within the shadow of these mountain mysteries, he feels no gloom, but rises with exultant joy to the majesty of all around him. Another is pale with fear ; his step falters, his head swims, his brain reels ; affrighted and desponding, he longs for a smoother path and a more open sky.

A man like him, whose sturdy eloquence drew out Jerusalem and all Judea, would laugh to the shaking of his camel's hair raiment, at the idea of a sprinkling. Jordan, at its overflow, was not too deep for him. Yet men of gentler mould start and shudder on the brink of a believer's grave with Christ. I wonder not that men so delicate should sometimes falter on the threshold of still mightier truths. "If thou hast run with footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses, if in the land of peace wherein thou trustedst they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

Doubtless such constitutional tendencies may account, in part, for the varying opinions of men. Yet it cannot be conceded that the New Testament has a differing creed for every

varying temperament, or that it softens its doctrines to suit the exigencies of an effeminate age. The creed of a good man will stretch a long way, sticking fast at one end to the New Testament. The elongation is ample, without lengthening the Scriptures, leaving the Bible for a centre—with such a radius you may sweep the whole area of evangelical Christendom.

On the basis of this position you erect two claims. The first is, "Perfect freedom among Christians in forming denominations according to their preferences or their views in regard to worship and doctrine, and in attaching themselves to such denomination as they may choose." Page 57.

This is but our old doctrine of religious liberty. You urge it with a zeal and earnestness for which we thank you. It would have fallen like music on our ears some sixteen centuries ago. But I hear the wail of children, of children whose right of choice in Baptism and church membership is wrested away forever. Will you claim thus stoutly for the man a "perfect freedom in attaching himself to such denomination as he shall choose," but

virtually annul the privilege, by joining him to a church when a child. Will you claim for the man a choice in Baptism, but forestal him in the choice while he is yet a babe? Shutting him up to the opinions of others unless he will join in an "affront to the Christian world," by submitting to be "re-baptized." Shall childhood, in its innocence and helplessness, be despoiled of its freedom? Will you wring from the tender hand of infancy what you dare not *ask* of manhood? Oh! sir, at every point this practice of yours infringes Christian principle. As the truth advances it must *die*.

The second claim you urge on the basis of your central position is, "That in the evangelical denominations, there shall be a recognition of the Ministry, membership, and sacraments of each other." Page 60. You lay much stress on this claim, and urge it as a "*sine qua non*," in any attempt to promote the desired union.

It has already been shown, and indeed is fully admitted in your pamphlet, that so far as Baptists are concerned, they recognize the *Ministry* of all evangelical denominations.

Doubtless this portion of the claim was intended for another of the "exclusive denominations." However this may be, its justice is heartily conceded.

You also claim among evangelical churches, a recognition of the *membership* of each other. By "membership" is clearly meant their membership in that Church which is the redeemed body of Christ. Since you urge it upon the broad ground "that whoever gives evidence that he is accepted of the Father as reconciled through the Son, is a member of the one true Catholic Church, and should be in every way recognized as such in the great family of the Christain brotherhood." The claim is just, and is cheerfully conceded—Baptists have always admitted it.

But you specify as a third item of the claim, a recognition of the *sacraments* of our brethren. Here at length we reach the real *fons mali*. This single subordinate demand covers the whole question at issue. Just here or nowhere, is to be found our "exclusivism." Baptists do not recognize sprinkling as Baptism; in common with all evangelical Christians, they believe that Baptism is a pre-requisite to com

munion, and hence the alleged exclusivism of their invitation to the Supper.

It is true as you state that of the dead, neither John Elliot, nor David Brainerd, nor Henry Martyn, would, if living, be invited to the Supper in a Baptist Church. It is true that "of the living, neither Dr. Duff, nor Dr. Goodell, nor Dr. Eli Smith," would be included in our invitation. We love and fellowship the living as faithful followers of Christ; we cherish the memory of those who have gone, and reckon them among the saints made perfect; but we square both the living and the dead by the Scripture. We cannot alter the words of Jesus out of reverence for either. The dead would not wish it; the living should not ask it; unity does not demand it. Nor can we invite *any* of our Christian brethren, who in our view remain unbaptized, to our communion. We love and fellowship them as Christians, and thank them for a zeal and piety, which is often worthy of our emulation, yet we cannot with a good conscience be unmindful of plain Scriptural requirements.

But in this are we more exclusive than our brethren? You claim as strongly as we, that

Baptism, in *your* sense of the term, is a prerequisite to communion. You would not invite a man however great or good to the communion of the Presbyterian Church, who refused to submit himself to what *you* call Baptism. We do but the same. The simple question is, what is Baptism? Let me suppose a case: a Presbyterian of undoubted piety presents himself at our communion. True, the churches of his own denomination abound, and the proper place for him is at the table of some one of these, were we ever so willing to receive him. But he insists upon presenting himself with us. We do not thrust him out, such rudeness is unknown. We simply do not invite him, and leave the responsibility with him. Straightway we are branded as exclusive, and this is our sentence; "He that excludes one whom Christ has not excluded; he that shuts out one whom Christ has not shut out, offers a direct affront to Christ himself, and so far as the act goes renounces the Saviour also." Page 60. And now suppose this same man of undoubted piety had presented himself at your communion without what *you* call Baptism. Would you have

invited him? Would you not have pointed him to his first duty, and shut him out from the Supper until he had discharged it. But hold: remember "He that excludes one whom Christ has not excluded; he that shuts out one whom Christ has not shut out, offers a direct affront to Christ himself, and so far as the act goes renounces the Saviour also." Let me repeat it—the simple question is, what is Baptism? If sprinkling is Baptism, we are justly condemned. If it is not, we are acquitted.

It might be urged with force, that Baptists are less exclusive than their brethren. We commune at least with all our membership, and this is not true of them. Children sprinkled in infancy, become members of the church. Formerly they were admitted at a suitable age to the communion, and treated as members. Hence in New England the unconverted church membership so notorious in the time of Edwards, and hence in after years, New England Unitarianism, with its progeny of rationalism, spiritualism, and wrong, the growth entirely of Pedo-Baptist churches. But now, I believe, they

are not admitted to the communion until after giving evidence of conversion. Is it not hard for a church to exclude its own members from communion? Dr. Miller avers that "there are but two places in the universe where there are no children. One is the bottomless pit, and the other is the Baptist Church." But, for once, the Doctor was mistaken. A modern writer has added, "there is one more place, and that is the Pede-Baptist communion table."

It is plain that, at the least, we are no more exclusive than our brethren. Better than this—that we are no more exclusive than the New Testament.

Our brethren of other denominations have much to say upon this point, and sometimes it is hard to credit their sincerity. It is but a little while since they refused to recognize us as a people, and now, no privilege would seem to be so priceless as a seat at our communion. How often in the lifetime of a Presbyterian would his spiritual strength be renewed by the desired enlargement of our table. How often would he suffer from its present limitations. The question of pre-

requisites aside—the place for one to celebrate this ordinance is in the church to which he belongs. This gadding from place to place for communion, among members of the same denomination, is not to be approved. Nor yet this human fondness which prates of communion with mothers and daughters, and boarding-school companions, as if it were a communion among ourselves instead of a communion with Christ. The commandment is, “This do in remembrance of me.” All else is incidental. The ordinance was never designed for a symbol of fellowship between different denominations, or churches, still less between different associations of ministers or laymen. It is a *church* ordinance, and as such to be duly administered by each particular church for the benefit of its individual members. It is not of right but of courtesy that a stranger of the same denomination is included in the church invitation. Still less is it becoming to “*insist*” that one of another denomination, with a table of his own near by “*shall*” be admitted to the communion of a particular church, though in violation of their honest and conscientious convictions.

All these differences of opinion hinge upon the single question of what constitutes a believer's Baptism. This question I do not propose to consider, I will but notice the declaration of your pamphlet, that "no one mode of Baptism has been specified as the only one." Page 60. To your mind "nothing is more certain" than this, since "men equally learned, equally pious, equally eminent in talent, and equally useful, have embraced different views on the subject." Page 27. It may be admitted that wise and good men have differed at this point as they have at almost every other, and this should lead us to a more childlike reliance upon the simple teachings of the word of God. But that the opinions of the learned and pious are so *equally* divided may not improperly be questioned. Passing the testimony of the New Testament and the steady opposition to a change of mode by Baptists under varying names in each succeeding century, let me quote from the ranks of Pedo-Baptists themselves.

John Calvin says:—"The very word baptize, however, signifies to immerse, and it is

certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."

Luther says: "The term baptizo is Greek, and may be rendered dipping, as when we dip anything in water so that it is covered all over. And although the custom be now abolished among many (for they do not dip their children, but only pour on them a little water,) yet they ought to be wholly immersed."

Melancthon says: "Baptism is an entire action, to wit, a dipping and the pronouncing these words, I baptize thee," &c.

Of the writers of church history is there a *single one* who may not be quoted at this point without fear. Neander says: "In respect to the form of Baptism, it was in conformity with the original institution, and the original import of the symbol performed by immersion as a sign of entire Baptism into the Holy Spirit and of being entirely penetrated by the same."*

Mosheim declares that in the first century Baptism was administered "By immersing the candidate wholly in water."†

*History, Vol. 1, p. 310.

†Ecclesiastical History, Century 1st, part II., chap. 4.

Winer, Tholuch, Hahn, Augusti and Jacobi, say: "The whole body was immersed in water." A host of others might be added.

But your demand that we shall "recognize the sacraments of others," involves not merely the recognition of sprinkling as Baptism in the case of *believers*, but also the recognition of sprinkling as Baptism, when administered to infants. If you asked us to recognize the sprinkling of an infant as an act of formal consecration, it would be a large demand; but to ask us to recognize it as a sacrament, and as the sacrament of believer's Baptism, is too much. If this is the price of union, we are too poor to purchase it.

That infant sprinkling is not in the New Testament is now a "conceded fact." Its founders did not base it there; none but its feeblest advocates defend it there. Says the great Schleiermacher, "he that will find it in the New Testament must first put it there." Says Neander, "we have all reason for not deriving infant Baptism from apostolic institution." Says the Chevalier Bunsen, it "was utterly unknown to the early Church, not only down to the end of the second, but, indeed, to

the middle of the third centuries." Says the North British Review, in another than the article from which I have already quoted, "The *only* Baptism known to the New Testament was that of adults." And yet all these cling to it, all defend it, but defend it only on a theory which leaves the "Mother of Harlots" unchallenged in her guilt.

Nor will you find it in the history of the period approaching so nearly the time of the apostles, as to permit the conjecture that it was founded on the "*unwritten* authority of inspiration." That it is unknown to the history of the first two centuries will not safely be denied. Search them as with a lighted candle, and you shall find it not. Among their fauna, or their flora, will be found no trace. Not one "fossil drop" is left on their formations.

Do you ask, "How then, came it in the Church about the middle of the third century? I will answer the question by another. How came sub-deacons, lectores, ostiarii, acolytes, exorcists?—(an increase of church officers from two to seven.) How came church penance, church absolution, the beginning of

Peter's primacy, and the germ of the mediæval priesthood, all in that same century, and some of them in the same year?

The truth is, men had set themselves seriously at the work of improving Christ's Gospel, and before they had done with it they made it look as Rebecca would have looked in the dress of a modern belle, pinched like a wasp, but bedizzened like a butterfly,—as Elijah would have looked shaven of a beard which swept his bosom, despoiled of a mantle whose every fold had sanctity, but adorned with a buff waistcoat, scarlet breeches, gold knee buckles, and a pouncet box.

Its history is simply this—such views of natural depravity had found their way into the church as left little children exposed to punishment and perdition. Baptism was resorted to as the means of their salvation. In the Eastern church it was administered by immersion, and the practice continues until this day. In the Western, where a change of mode in clinic cases had already been permitted, and from similar views of a supposed necessity, it was administered by sprinkling. In

both cases it was defended as an "unconditional necessity."

Linked thus inseparably in its origin to the dogma of Baptismal regeneration, and accustomed so long to its companionship, can you wonder that it grieves for it now, and like Rachel, weeping for her children, refuses to be comforted? It is cruel to part them. The recent decline of the one is owing in no small degree to its partial separation from the other. Born at one birth, were these two children of superstition, one was the older by so little that the other grasped his heel, the elder should have had pre-eminence, but the younger stole his birth-right; yet ever as he speaks, one thinks with the grand old patriarch, that "the voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hand is the hand of Esau."

And do you demand that we shall recognize this as a sacrament? now when its friends are forsaking it? when your own churches abound with members who refuse to practise it? Ask it not, I entreat you, bind not thus the living and the dead—a life of warmth and vigor to a cold and senseless corpse.

Plainly then, we do not accede to this claim

for a mutual "recognition of the sacraments." It is the only "claim" you present which is not fully admitted. Add but a single modifying clause, and this also may be granted. Claim but a recognition of these sacraments, *so far as they are duly administered according to Christ's ordinance*, and all your demands are complied with. Is such a modification unreasonable? Can a Protestant refuse it? Can he call that exclusivism in an offensive sense, which only asks conformity to the Scriptures, as the condition of a full and hearty recognition? If you ask who shall decide on this conformity to the Scriptures, I answer, each particular Church, in the judgment of its individual members, in the exercise of that religious freedom which you so ably advocate; and the right which they claim for themselves, let them grant as freely to others.

Our reasons for this non-recognition, all spring from our views of Baptism. Just here is the only substantial difference between us. Trifling in itself, it is yet important in its consequences. It is not that we ascribe any mysterious efficacy to baptism; it is not that

with the spirit of a Pharisee we cling to its outward form; nor yet that we rely unduly on its spiritual meaning; but it is, that the right to alter this ordinance involves the right to make other and momentous changes. Said Algernon Sydney, in the prison, the night before his execution: "Nephew, I value not mine own life a chip, but what concerns me is, that the law which takes my life may hang every one of you, whenever it is thought convenient." It was a noble utterance, and embodies the substance of our honest opposition to the claim you urge.

But I fear I am writing you too long a letter. It has already passed the limits I assigned. I have written plainly, but not unkindly. If in aught I am mistaken, forgive me. I owe you much; not only for the lines of truth which you have written, but also for an example of Christian industry, such as the lives of few men can furnish. Nothing could have moved me to this public dissent from your opinions, but a deep conviction that interests, high above all personal considerations, demanded it.

There are sentiments in your pamphlet

which command my warmest approbation. It breathes a spirit of earnest desire for a closer union among the followers of Christ. In this I deeply sympathize with you. The time was, when the Church was one;—fresh from the moulding hand of Jesus, it was one in form and in spirit; disturbed by no jarring note of discord; untroubled by fraternal strife; displaying on the banner which waved above unbroken ranks—“In things essential, unity; in things not essential, liberty; in all things, charity.” In the lapse of ages, it will be one again; but this will only be, when, with an humble and obedient spirit, we follow the Divine original; taking the Church of the New Testament for our model, and building “on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.”

THE

BAPTISMAL BALANCE.

BY J. NEWTON BROWN,

EDITOR OF THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.



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P R E F A C E .



If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. What a maxim! Though the diamond commands, it is said, a price a thousand times its own weight in gold, what is it in the sight of God compared with the lustre of a pure impartial mind—a mind ever prepared to sacrifice *party for truth*? But every Christian is under the most sacred obligations and solemn vows to maintain such a mind. *He that loveth father or mother more than me*, says Christ, *is not worthy of me.*

Baptism, it will be admitted, is not well understood by all Christians. It has given occasion to a protracted controversy—when it should have been (what in reality it is) a simple but comprehensive law of love, commanding enlightened and prompt obedience.

Our own free land affords the only field for the fair settlement of this controversy. From the days of CONSTANTINE to those of WASHINGTON, the enactments of civil power, and the anathemas of ecclesiastical councils have interfered with the discovery of Truth. Here, however, they no longer remain to disturb the judgment, to seduce the passions, or to silence *the answer of a good conscience toward God.*

As by our Lord's great Commission Baptism is made the *first* duty of his disciples, need we remark how sacred is the obligation that hence rests upon ministers of the

Gospel, and especially upon men of learning, to instruct the disciples of Christ truly in relation to their Lord's will—as Ananias instructed Paul at Damascus. *If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?* The whole responsibility of Error, with its endless train of evil consequences, may be found in this case beyond most others, to lie upon the *Ministry*. Let an awful fear of God, then, hold a torch before us in all our inquiries, and *the love of Christ constrain us* not only to ascertain the truth for ourselves, but also to *feed his sheep* and to *feed his lambs*.

Every good man must desire to see this unhappy strife brought to a close by the prevalence of truth and love.

To aid this desirable issue is the design of this brief treatise. It is an attempt to *weigh impartially* the principal arguments on both sides—believing that Truth *must* have a weight of evidence which, if fairly weighed in the balance, will quickly turn the scale. Truth is real *substance*, while Error is but a flattering *show*—“the shadow of a shade.”

The history of this little work is singular and curious. It was originally prepared by the Editor, in 1833, for the *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE*; and by the request of the Publishers of that work, submitted to the examination of Rev. Dr. JENKS of Boston, on the one side, and Rev. Dr. STOW on the other. On receiving their separate entire approval, as representatives of Pedobaptists and Baptists, it was stereotyped, and the plates remained with the rest of those cast for the *ENCYCLOPEDIA*, until near the time of its publication in 1835.

Early in that year, one of the Publishers (a Pedobaptist) in looking over the plate proofs, saw it; and although

it had already passed honorably the ordeal prescribed, desired permission of the author to send it to Andover for the examination of the theological professors, especially Dr. Woods and Prof. STUART. This the author of course consented to, on condition that if any objections were raised against it, they should be sent to him in writing. After some time (during which it appears, the article had been examined also at Bangor, Maine,) he received a very courteous letter from Rev. Dr. Woods of Andover, commending the article, as "very able, and perhaps as impartial as could be written by any man having a decided opinion." The Doctor however recommended as a better method, that the article should be divided, and two competent writers employed, each of whom should present the views and arguments of his own denomination, without seeing those of the other. This course was adopted by the Publishers of the *ENCYCLOPEDIA*, (who were all Pedobaptist gentlemen,) with the consent of the Editor, though at the sacrifice of his own article once deliberately approved.

After the lapse of twenty years, he now offers it to the Christian public—believing that it will be found to contain all that is vital to the questions at issue between Pedobaptists and the Baptists. He has however *added* some few things at the close of the former arguments, to meet the new phases which the controversy has since assumed by the publications of Drs. PETERS and BEECHER, Prof. WILSON and Chevalier BUNSEN.

No work is known constructed on the same principle—certainly none that is equally compressed, and that has passed the same ordeal.

J. N. B.

Philadelphia, June 29, 1853

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

ALTHOUGH it was foretold that the appropriate baptism of Christ in person, was that of the Holy Ghost; yet the baptism of water, commenced by John the Baptist, was sanctioned by our Lord; not only by his own exemplary submission to it, but by perpetuating it under his own authority and eye, in the hands of his followers. John iii. 22-24; iv. 1-3.

Some of the Jews, or of John's disciples, it seems, took occasion from this circumstance to represent the conduct of Jesus in an invidious light to John; supposing that there was some essential difference and rivalry between them. The answer of John shows that the superior success of Jesus, so far from exciting his envy, was the object of his expectation and exulting joy; inasmuch as the baptism of Jesus, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) was in fact the continuation and consummation of his own.

He must increase, but I must decrease. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given ALL things into his hand. John iii. 25-26.—Baptism by water, then, whether administered by the forerunner, or by the followers of our Lord—whether before or after his resurrection—appears to be but *one baptism*; nor is there manifest any *essential* difference, either in design, subject, or mode.

Yet the Commission in Matt. xxviii. 18-20, so clearly defines the objects, as well as extends the sphere of ministerial duty, in regard to preaching, baptizing, and teaching, that it has been customary to refer to it as the definite authority on all these points, and even to consider it as the formal institution of Christian baptism. Nor can any reasonable objection be urged against this view of it; since up to the time of that great Commission, the labors of the Apostles had been limited by our Lord himself, to the single nation of the Jews. That Commission gave them authority to carry their labors to the ends of the earth; and to transmit the great work of the world's conversion to their successors in the ministry of the Gospel, to the end of time. *All authority is given unto me, (said our Lord,) in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make all nations my disciples; baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all*

things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo ! I am with you all days, even unto the end of the world."

The authority of this passage is allowed by 'l Christians, however much they may differ in expounding it. The order runs, *teach all nations, or make all nations my disciples; baptizing them; &c.* The thing speaks for itself, the style is popular, and the sense plain. It must mean, either, baptize whole nations; or such of all nations as become my disciples by believing the Gospel you preach; or believers of all nations, and their unbelieving posterity. The first is too gross to be admitted by Protestants, because it cannot be effected without force; and the grossness of the first instantly turns the mind upon the second. This is agreed by all Protestants to be the plain and true sense; although by a great majority of divines it has been thought not to exclude the additional idea contained in the third interpretation. Difference of opinion on this last point, divided the Christian world into Baptists and Pedobaptists.

Another more modern point of difference has arisen from the circumstance that the western branch of the Pedobaptist body has, for several hundred years past, relinquished immersion, and adopted sprinkling or affusion, as an equally valid and more convenient mode of administering the

ordinance of baptism. "In the bosom of a church superstitiously devoted to ancient rites and forms, there sprung up," says Prof. Stuart, "a conviction that the mode of baptism was one of the *adiaphora* of religion, i. e., something unessential to the rite itself, and which might be modified by time and place, without any encroachment upon the command itself to baptize. Gradually did this conviction increase, until the whole Roman Catholic Church, that of Milan only excepted, admitted it. By far the greater part of the Protestant world have also acceded to the same views. Even the English Episcopal Church, and the Lutheran Churches, both zealous in times past for what they supposed to be apostolic and really ancient usage, have had no serious difficulty in adopting modes of baptism quite different from that of immersion."

In the above historical statements, the candor of Prof. Stuart acquits the Baptists of all blame as to the origin of this modern difference on the *mode* of baptism.

CHAPTER II.

STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.

IT is an excellent remark of Richard Baxter, made after the experience of a long life of controversy, that "most questions in religion have need of fair stating, rather than of warm debating." It would seem so in the case before us, and the plan of the present work, not only admits, but requires, the accomplishment of what the pious Baxter thought so desirable.

In stating the questions on which the Baptists and Pedobaptists, as such, are divided, it should be observed, in the first place, in what points they are agreed. Let it be borne in mind, then, that there is no dispute against believers as the subjects, or against immersion as the mode, of Christian baptism. These points are matters of cordial agreement on both sides. But the real questions which divide them are properly these: *Are infants, as well as believers, lawful subjects:* and, *Are pouring and sprinkling, as well as immersion, lawful modes of Christian baptism?* On both these questions Pe-

dobaptists take the affirmative, and Baptists the negative. A summary of the views and arguments of the former, as exhibited by the ablest and best writers in this country, Dr. Woods and Prof. Stuart, will here be given, together with the replies of their opponents.

I. ARE INFANTS LAWFUL SUBJECTS?

“The doctrine of Infant Baptism,” says Dr. Woods, “is a doctrine which I very seriously believe, and which I feel it to be my duty earnestly to maintain. The doctrine is dear to my heart, and is associated in my contemplations with the most sacred truths of religion, and the most precious interests of Christ’s kingdom. My manner of treating this subject is not the result of haste, but of repeated and long continued investigations. I am persuaded that those whose opinions I oppose, and who constitute a very large and respectable denomination of Christians, will never suspect me of being deficient in affection for them, or in readiness to do what I can to promote their welfare. For many years in the earlier part of my life, I had a decided prepossession in favor of their peculiar sentiments on the subject of Baptism; and they have a right to inquire for the reasons of my present belief. I here frankly give them my reasons. In the following Lectures they will find the prin-

cipal considerations which satisfy my own mind in favor of Infant Baptism." In the second edition he adds in the same amiable spirit: "I take pleasure in acknowledging, that the strictures of my Baptist brethren have been of real use to me, and have led me to correct some mistakes, to give to some of my expressions and arguments, a more unexceptionable form, and to establish my position by some new considerations."

In treating this topic, Dr. Woods suggests the following cautions: "*First*, take care not to magnify the subject beyond its real importance. *Second*, consider that men, whose character entitles them to our affection and confidence, may be led to a different conclusion from us in regard to this rite. Whatever may have been the precepts of Christ, or his apostles, to those who enjoyed their personal instructions; it is plain that there is no *express precept* respecting Infant Baptism in our sacred writings. The proof, then, that Infant Baptism is a divine institution must be made out in another way. And that other way, though perfectly satisfactory to us, may not be so to those who have been placed in different circumstances from us by birth and education, and have formed different habits of thinking; especially concerning the *kind* or *degree of evidence* necessary to support a positive institution. *Third*. Never introduce this subject in the way of

controversy, except when a pure regard to the interests of Christ's kingdom requires it. *Fourth.* Treat those who differ from you in regard to Infant Baptism with uniform kindness. Study to do them good. Exercise towards them, not only common candor and good-will, but a *generous friendship*; and exhibit this friendship in substantial acts."

CHAPTER III

THE KIND AND DEGREE OF EVIDENCE.

“DIFFERENT conceptions respecting the proper mode of reasoning,” Dr. Woods continues, “are evidently the principal causes of the difference which exists among men in regard to the question at issue. As a preparation for a profitable discussion, therefore, it is of special consequence that you should free your minds from all mistaken apprehensions as to the *kind and degree of evidence* which is to be considered necessary. Suppose a man is accused before a court of justice of a particular crime; and suppose there is clear *circumstantial* evidence, and that only, of his guilt. If the court demand *direct, positive* proof of the crime, the evidence which they have will go for nothing, and the man, though manifestly guilty, must be pronounced innocent.—Even when the evidence sought is of the right kind; we must still take care not to mistake as to the *degree* of it which is necessary.—We are to remember also, that much depends on our prevailing disposition. The consti-

tution, or habit of the mind, and the admission of other truths allied to the one under consideration, may have the *effect of evidence*; and if it could be clearly perceived and defined, it might appear to have the *nature* of evidence.—One more remark on this point. Although the evidence, by which we are able to prove a particular truth, may be feeble or obscure; we are not hence to conclude, that it has not, even now, clear and perfect evidence in the view of those who possess a higher degree of knowledge. If you apply these remarks to the subject under consideration, you will soon be satisfied of the truth of the following position, namely: that *the want of an express positive command of Scripture, that infants should be baptized, is not to be considered as a valid objection against Infant Baptism.* As this position is of special importance, I shall take some pains to illustrate its truth.

“Admitting, as we must, that all positive religious rites are *originally* founded on a divine command; we cannot safely conclude that such a command will be repeated to all those who shall afterwards be under obligation to observe such rites, or even that the original command will be preserved, and communicated to them in the sacred writings. Sufficient evidence may be afforded in some other way—particularly, by an *unwritten*

tradition. If we should insist upon the repetition of a divine command at different times, or upon a written record of it, as indispensable; we should set aside one of the methods which God has manifestly adopted in regard to the positive institutions of religion. For example, in relation to the Christian Sabbath—Female Communion—and the authority of some of the Sacred Writings.”

To most of these general considerations suggested by Dr. Woods, the Baptists make no objection; admitting their usefulness in relation to many subjects, *but not to the positive institutions of religion.* For as Dr. Goodwin observes: “There is this difference between doctrinal truths, and divine institutions—that one *truth* may be by reason better fetched out of another, and more safely and easily, than *institutions*. For one truth begets another, and truth is infinite *in the consequences of it*; but so institutions are not.” Circumstantial and inferential evidence is very properly employed in relation to moral duties, and questions of fact; but the question concerning Infant Baptism is of another order. It is a question of *right*—not arising from natural relationship—but from positive institution. The point to be settled is simply this: Did Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, appoint the Baptism of Infants as one of the statutes of his kingdom? Is there any record of such an appointment

in his word? It is admitted by Dr. Woods, that no such record exists. But then, he adds, there is no such record of the appointment of the Christian Sabbath, Female Communion, and the Inspiration of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which yet Baptists receive. To this the Baptists reply: 1. The Epistle to the Hebrews we receive on *internal evidence that it is Paul's*, and the known fact that he was an inspired man. Its reception, however confirmed by the voice of the ancient church, does not depend merely on "*circumstantial evidence*," or on "*unwritten tradition*."—2. As to Female Communion the Lord's Supper was appointed for the observance neither of males nor females, *as such*, but for Christ's *disciples* embodied in Christian churches. See Matt. xxvi.; Acts ii.; 1 Cor. xi. The right of females to the ordinance rests on the same ground precisely as that of males—namely, *discipleship to Christ*, and a voluntary connection with His visible church. Have infants such a right?—3. In relation to the Sabbath, we have express divine institution for its observance; and apostolic example authorizing the change of the day. But for the Baptism of Infants we have neither; and but few of all who have practised it, have even pretended that it rests on any *scriptural* authority. Neither the African nor Greek Churches, the Church of Rome, nor the most learned divines of Germany, or of the Church of England, have

rested the custom of Infant Baptism on the Scriptures. Prof. Stuart says, "Commands, or plain and certain examples in the New Testament relative to it, I do not find," and even Dr. Woods himself admits "the silence of the New Testament respecting Infant Baptism." But a doctrine taught neither in the Old Testament, nor in the New; neither by precept nor example; the Baptists feel bound in conscience to reject, as belonging to "the doctrines and commandments of men;" and any mode of reasoning by which it is supported, must inevitably, in their opinion, let in a flood of the superstitions of Popery. "The term institution," says Dr. Goodman, in his Preservative against Popery, "implies a setting up *de novo*, or the appointing *that* to become a *duty* which was not knowable, or at least not known to be so, before it became so appointed. Now it is very evident, that all things of this nature ought to be appointed *very plainly* and expressly, or else they can carry no obligation with them; for seeing the whole reason of their becoming matter of law, or duty, lies in the will of the legislator; if that be not plainly discovered, they cannot be said to be *instituted*, and so there can be no obligation to observe them; because *where there is no law, there can be no transgression*; and a law is no law, in effect, which is not sufficiently promulgated."

The Rev. J. S. C. F. Frey, in his *Essays on Christian Baptism*, lays down the following clear and fundamental principles on this point:—"1. The nature of a Positive Law differs essentially from that of a moral law.—2. The obligation to obey a Positive Law arises solely from the authority of the Lawgiver.—3. The law of the institution is the only rule of obedience.—4. The law of a positive institution must be so plain and explicit, as to stand in no need of any other assistance to understand it but the mere letter of the law, like the words of a father to his family.—5. None but the Law-giver himself has a right to alter a positive institution.—6. Nothing must be added to, or taken from a positive institution.—As these principles," he adds, "are recognized by the most eminent Protestant authors as legitimate, and *used* by them as the most successful weapons in exploding the superstitions of Popery, they will be revered by their successors. That Infants are not proper subjects of Baptism, will thus appear evident from the following considerations: Every positive institution, or religious observance, not sanctioned by divine precept, or Scripture example, is unlawful and displeasing to God: sacred Scripture affords neither precept nor example for Infant Baptism; therefore, Infant Baptism is unlawful and displeasing to God."

CHAPTER IV.

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

THE view of the respective parties as to the *kind of evidence* has been given at length; because this is admitted on both sides to be the most vital point of the controversy; and could this be harmoniously adjusted, probably the dispute would be at an end. But till this is effected, it will be necessary to exhibit the *degree* of circumstantial evidence, which in the judgment of Dr. Woods, establishes Infant Baptism as a divine institution.

The chain of circumstantial evidence is thus stated:—"I. The rite of Infant Baptism manifestly corresponds with the natural relation between parents and children.—II. The relation between parents and children, and the consecration of both to God, was actually marked by a divinely appointed and significant rite, through the Patriarchal and Mosaic economy; the same rite being appointed for parents and children; having a primary relation to spiritual blessings, and being a confirmation to all true saints of the spiritual blessings secured

by God's covenant with Abraham.—III. The Christian Religion was evidently founded upon the Old Testament Scriptures, and was for substance a continuation of the religion there taught.—IV. We cannot certainly conclude that our Saviour did not give his apostles specific instructions on this or any other subject, merely because such instructions are not preserved in the records of the New Testament.—V. The Scriptures of the New Testament, understood according to just rules of interpretation, imply that the children of believers are to be baptized. The rule of interpretation, which is of the highest consequence, and which will aid us most in discovering the true meaning of the Scriptures in relation to the subject now before us, is, that we *put ourselves, as far as may be, in the place of those who gave instruction, and of those who received it.* Let us now come directly to the subject. Christ appointed Baptism to be administered to all who should become proselytes (*mathetas*, disciples,) to his religion, that is, to all Christians. Matt. xxviii. 18–20. “Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” The word *mathetuesate*, rendered teach, properly signifies, *make disciples.*—1. This command *was given by one who was born a Jew,* and educated among the Jews, and was perfectly acquainted with

all their institutions and laws, with their customs and usages, and with the dispensations of Divine Providence towards them.—2. And *the command was addressed to Jews*. Now whatever there was in this general circumstance which could have influence upon the meaning of the command, or which would naturally cause it to be understood in one way or another, is worthy of special attention. Let it be considered then that the Jews had long been accustomed to make proselytes from Paganism to their religion. And whenever the Gentiles embraced the Jewish religion, they were treated in regard to circumcision according to the Jewish Law; that is, they were circumcised—*parents and children*. This was the law of the Jews; and this was the uniform practice. Hence it must be easy to determine how Christian Jews would be likely to understand the duty of proselyting idolaters and unbelievers to the true religion. Suppose it to have been the appointment of our Saviour, that circumcision should be applied to converts to Christianity, as it had been to converts to Judaism, and suppose him to have said to his Apostles: “Go ye, proselyte all nations, and circumcise them,” making no mention of *children*. Could the Apostles have doubted a moment, in such a case, whether circumcision was meant to be applied to the *children* of proselytes? But why should we suppose

they would put a different construction upon the Commission they received from Christ, because *Baptism* was made the sign of proselytes, instead of *circumcision*? especially when we add another important consideration, namely, *the previous practice of the Jews to baptize proselytes and their children.*—3. The Scriptures often represent *parents and children, as receiving the same treatment from Divine Providence*, and as being closely connected together in respect to their most important interests. This relation was as obvious and important, and as worthy of being marked by a religious rite as formerly. Thus we reason concerning the Sabbath. And this agrees with the common method of understanding a charter.—4. *The previous instructions of Christ to his Apostles* would lead them to the same inference. Matt. xix. 13, 14; Mark x. 13, 14; Luke xviii. 15, 16, from which it appears that the children of believers are members of Christ's kingdom or the Christian Church—if not in the highest sense, yet as related to it, and entitled to its privileges. If so, there could be no doubt that they were to receive the *mark* of discipleship.—5. *The conduct of the Apostles* while executing their commission seems to imply that they so understood it; since we read of their baptizing *households*, or *families*. Acts xvi. 14, 15; also, xvi. 33; and 1 Cor. i. 16.—6. *The declara-*

tion of the Apostles in their Epistles support the same construction. 1 Cor. vii. 14; Ephes. vi. 4, where the children of believers are called *holy*, i. e., consecrated, and are required to be brought up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, i. e., as scholars in the school of Christ.—7. *The silence of the New Testament respecting the subject of Infant Baptism*: because as circumstances were, there was no occasion to enjoin it, and no occasion to discuss the subject, or even to mention it. All the Jews, those who embraced Christianity and those who rejected it, had always been accustomed to consider their children as a *holy seed*, consecrated to God, and to see them receive the seal of God's covenant. Now if Christianity had cut them off from this relation to God, and had deprived them of the sign of being consecrated to him, and had treated them as having no part or lot with God's people; can we think that such a change as this could have been made without occasioning some animadversion?—8. *The feelings of parents*. Infant Baptism, when apprehended correctly, must be agreeable to the best feelings of pious parents respecting their infant offspring; and the laws and institutions of religion are all intended to exercise and improve our benevolent and pious affections.—9. *Ecclesiastical History*. The Testimony of Ecclesiastical History on this subject, is just such as

we should expect, on the supposition that Infant Baptism was, from the beginning, universally regarded as a Christian institution. In this respect, the same remarks as have been made on the manner in which the subject is treated in the New Testament will apply generally to the earliest Christian Fathers. They had little or no occasion to enter on a particular discussion of the subject, or even to make any express mention of it. Accordingly we find in the writers who next succeeded the Apostles, only allusions to Infant Baptism. These allusions, however, are of such a nature, that they cannot well be accounted for without supposing that Infant Baptism was *the uniform practice*. But the Fathers, who wrote in the following ages, were more and more particular and explicit in their testimony. For instance, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Optatus, Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine, Celestius, and Pelagius. Besides, in the catalogues of heresies, from Irenæus to Theodoret, the Fathers mention no sect that denied Infant Baptism, except such as denied all Baptism. And where is the evidence that Infant Baptism was an innovation? On the contrary, the testimony of the Fathers in favor of Infant Baptism as the uniform practice of the church, and an apostolic tradition, is worthy of full credit, and as the circum-

stances were, affords a conclusive argument that it was a divine institution."

To this series of arguments the Baptists briefly reply. I. That parents should religiously devote their children to the service of God is right and proper; but that Baptism is the mode of expressing such dedication, or that it has any correspondence with the *natural relation* between parents and children, does not appear from its revealed nature and design; but the contrary. Matt. iii. 6-9.—II. That *such a relation* was ever designed to be marked by circumcision is justly to be doubted; for, if so, the same reason existed for its appointment with the Patriarchs before Abraham; but it is clear that while the natural relation existed, there was no such mark in existence. Hence it follows that circumcision marked, not the common relation of pious parents and their children, but a peculiar covenant with Abraham *and his natural posterity*, which belongs to no others. See Gen. xvii.; Ps. cv.; Acts vii. 8; xv. 7-10; xxv. 21.—III. That the Christian Religion was founded on the Old Testament Scriptures, and was *for substance* a continuation of the religion there taught, we believe; but the question of Infant Baptism belongs not to *the substance* of either. And the Christian Church, Paul expressly calls a *new* organization. Ephes. ii. 15. Besides it is undeniable that *the*

substance of religion was the same with the patriarchs *before* Abraham, as afterwards. Yet there was in it no form of Infant Consecration.—IV. To suppose that our Lord gave his Apostles specific instructions in relation to positive rites, which are not recorded in the New Testament is to deny the great Protestant doctrine of the Sufficiency of the Scriptures. It is the common refuge of those who lack better evidence. But “*the Bible, the Bible only is the religion of Protestants.*”—V. The exact reverse of Dr. Woods’ fifth proposition appears to us to be true, namely: that the Scriptures of the New Testament, understood according to just rules of interpretation, imply that the children of believers are *not* to be baptized. For, according to the sound rule of interpretation he lays down, “of putting ourselves as far as may be in the place of those who gave instruction and of those who received it,” we reason thus:—1. He who gave the commission, *Go ye therefore, make all nations disciples, baptizing them, &c.*, was a Jew, who had been himself circumcised in infancy, but baptized in manhood, and who therefore did not regard circumcision and baptism as signifying the same thing.—2. Those who received the commission were Jews, who had themselves been in like manner circumcised in infancy, but baptized in manhood, on their own personal profession of repentance and faith in the approach-

ing Messiah ; and who had for a long time been actually employed by that Messiah himself in making and baptizing disciples among Jews, who had been already circumcised. John iv. 1, 2. The work assigned them in this commission was precisely the same as they had been employed in, except that it was now extended to all nations, embraced new facts and discoveries concerning the way of salvation, and had the promise of superior aids and qualifications from on high. How was it possible then for them to think of the law of *circumcision*, or the custom of *proselyte baptism*, (supposing it then existed,) as suggesting the proper interpretation of the law of Christian Baptism ? The supposition is to the last degree improbable. Their *past practice* was the natural, and the only natural mode of understanding their present commission. In their own nation they had already, under the eye and authority of their Lord, *made disciples and baptized them* ; they were now to do the same among *all nations* ; *teaching them, also, to observe all things whatsoever their Lord had commanded them*. The reasoning of Dr. Woods on this point, seems therefore void of any solid foundation. The Baptism of Infants, so far from being implied in the circumstances of Christ and his Apostles when the Commission was given, appears to be more decisively excluded by those very

circumstances.—3. That the Scriptures often represent parents and children as receiving the same treatment from Divine Providence, and being most closely connected together in respect to their most important interests, is admitted to be a fact of great moment. But that this connexion hence required to be marked by a religious rite, is very inconclusive reasoning. That it was as worthy of such a mark under the Christian, as under the Jewish dispensation, proves nothing; since circumcision marked only a *national* covenant with the Jews, and so far from being regarded as a privilege, is pronounced by the Apostle Peter, “a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.” Acts xv. 10. The Sabbath stands on a footing so different that it is impossible to reason justly from the one to the other. And as to Charters, such as are *national* are, it is true, understood to include children with their parents, but not such as are founded on the principle of *voluntary association*. Judaism was a *national* religion; but Christianity is not. The right to circumcision was *hereditary*; but the right to baptism is not. *Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.* Matt. iii. 9. *If thou believest with all thine heart it is lawful.* Acts viii. 37. Even if previously baptized in infancy, *the law of Christ requires every one who becomes his disciple to be baptized;*

nor can the obligation be possibly evaded, without doing violence to the language of the Commission.

—4. The previous instructions of Christ to his Apostles, Matt. xix. 13, 14, &c., concerning little children, say nothing of their baptism; but encourage them *to come to him*, on the ground, that *of such (i. e., of such as come to him,) is the kingdom of heaven*. But such as come to Christ, even though they be little children, are believers. It is not by the *first* birth, but by being “*born again*,” that any enter into the kingdom of God. John iii 3–8. The children of believing parents are no exceptions, and to interpret the words of Christ in Matt. xix. 13, 14, &c., in the Pedobaptist sense, is not to explain but to contradict him. As to a higher and lower sense of belonging to his kingdom, the distinction wants proof.—5. The conduct of the Apostles while executing their commission, appears not to imply a thought of baptizing any, except such as had been *made disciples*. Household baptisms naturally followed household conversions, of which we have examples in John iv. 53; Acts x. 2, and xviii. 8; and in the instances referred to by Dr. Woods, the evidence is complete that the families of Lydia, of the Philippian Jailer, and of Stephanas, were converts to Christ. Nor is there the slightest evidence of an infant among them.—6. The holiness of which the

Apostle speaks in 1 Cor. vii. 14, in relation to children, is evidently neither legitimacy on the one hand, nor is it *internal* holiness, nor *federal* holiness, on the other. The connexion and scope plainly show the meaning to be, that in consequence of the abrogation of the Jewish ceremonial law which forbid all connexion with unbelievers, (see Acts x. and xi.) both the unbelieving parent and children are *ceremonially sanctified*, that is to say, no bar remains to the believer's domestic intercourse with them. That the children of believers should be *brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, we cordially agree. This duty is plainly commended; but their baptism is not. And we beseech our brethren to observe, that in all the Epistles to the Churches there is not one exhortation to parents or children founded on the supposition of the children having been dedicated to God in baptism. How could this have happened had Infant Baptism been as "dear to the heart" of the Apostles as to Dr. Woods? Especially had it been "associated in their contemplations" as in his, "with the most sacred truths of religion, and the most precious interests of Christ's kingdom?"

—7. Since the silence of Scripture on this point, is admitted by Dr. Woods, it is natural to ask, What greater occasion there can be *now* to insist on Infant Baptism, than in the age of the New Testa-

ment? Let us be silent, where God is so in His word, lest we be found at last *to have taught for doctrines the commandments of men.* Had Infant Baptism come in the place of Circumcision, as the seal of the same covenant, why did not the Apostles say so? How readily in that case, would the Jewish believers have been satisfied to abandon the bloody rite of circumcision; since they could thus secure the same advantages by a rite far less burdensome. Acts xv.; Gal. v. But circumcision was forbidden only to Gentile believers, not to the Jews. Hence the privileges of their children being undiminished, the Jews had no cause of complaint, though baptism was not given them. Acts xxi. 20-25.—

8. The feelings of pious parents prove nothing; since they are in favor of Infant Baptism or against it, according to their views of God's word. A pious parent, if a Baptist, is anxious to have his children enjoy every appointed means of grace; but his best feelings are shocked and grieved by the baptism of infants, because in his view it is a profanation of a divine institution designed for a different end, and fraught not with a blessing, but a curse to the church of God. "To me it appears evident," says Andrew Fuller, "that Pedobaptism opened the door for the Romish Apostacy; and that the Church will never be restored to its purity, while it is allowed to have any existence in it." (Complete

Works, Vol. III. p. 555.)—9. The evidence from Ecclesiastical History of the existence of Infant Baptism, on which any reliance can be placed, does not begin until the time of Tertullian in the third century. Neither of the Apostolic Fathers, Clement, Hermas, Barnabas, Ignatius, or Polycarp, make any mention of it. Justin Martyr's account of Christian baptism, in his Second Apology, A. D. 150, is inconsistent with it. And Tertullian (*De Baptismo*) directly opposes it as an error peculiar to the Quintillanists, a sect of Montanists, which arose about A. D. 200. Fifty years after, it was sanctioned by Cyprian and his friends at the Council of Carthage; and thenceforward gradually prevailed, partly through false opinions and partly through force. But it never became universal among Christians. The testimony of the Fathers extends only to the Catholic Churches; and even were it not liable to just doubt, comes *too late* to prove Infant Baptism a divine institution.

The recent discovery of a lost work of Hippolytus, bishop of Portus, the new harbor of Rome, (A. D. 198–236,) has thrown new light upon this historical question. The result is thus stated by Chevalier Bunsen: "*Pedobaptism*, in the more modern sense—meaning thereby the baptism of new-born infants, with the vicarious promises of parents or sponsors—*was utterly unknown in the early church* ;

not only down to the end of the second, but indeed to the middle of the third century. . . . As in other cases the *origin* was innocent, and I think that we are at this moment better able than either the defenders or opponents of Infant Baptism have hitherto been, to explain *how it originated*. A passage in our Alexandrian Church-Book gives the true explanation of the assertion of Origen, himself an Alexandrian, that the baptism of children was an apostolical tradition; and it removes the origin of Infant Baptism from Tertullian and Hippolytus to the end of our present period—*Cyprian being the first father, who impelled by a fanatical enthusiasm, and assisted by a bad interpretation of the Old Testament, established it as a principle.*”

CHAPTER V.

ARE OTHER MODES THAN IMMERSION LAWFUL.

PROF. STUART begins the discussion of this point by an investigation of the radical meaning of the original terms. "The original etymological root of the verbs *baptizo*, *bapto*," he observes, "as also of the nouns *baptisis*, *baptisma*, *baptismos*, *baptisterion*, *baptistes*, *baptiria*, *baphe*, *bapheis*, *bapheion*, *baphike*, *bapsis*, and in like manner of the adjectives or verbals *baptos*, *baphikos*, *bapsimos*, —appears plainly to be the monosyllable BAP. In all the words derived from this root, there is a similarity of meaning, which shows an intimate connexion between them. The leading and original meaning of BAP seems to have been *dipping*, *plunging*, *immersion*, *soaking* or *drenching* in some liquid substance. As kindred to this meaning, and closely connected with it, i. e., as an effect resulting from such a cause, the idea of *dyeing*, *coloring*, *tinging*, seems also to have been often associated with the original root, and to have passed into many of its derivatives. For example; *baptos*,

dipped, immersed, colored; *bapto*, to dip, plunge, dye, color; *bapheus*, a dyer, usually limited to this signification, &c. The reader," he adds, "is desired particularly to notice, that while most of the nouns derived from BAP have a twofold sense, that of *immersion*, and that of *dyeing*, yet some of them are employed only in one sense exclusively, either that of *immersion* or that of *dyeing*. We shall see, in the sequel, that the verbs *bapto* and *baptizo* have distinctions of meaning analogous to these—distinctions which are never confounded by usage; while they both agree in one common and original meaning, viz.: that of *immersion* or *plunging*." The Professor goes on to show that in the New Testament, "*baptizo* and its derivatives are exclusively employed *when the rite of baptism is to be designated* in any form whatever; and in this case *bapto* seems purposely, as well as habitually, *excluded*. It (*baptizo*) is *not*, like this latter word (*bapto*), used to designate the idea of *coloring* or *dyeing*; and the ancient opinions which regards it as a *frequentative*, and common criticism "which makes it a *diminutive*, have no foundation in truth." The termination *zo*, or rather *izo*, which led to these false opinions, Dr. Judson and Dr. Carson, in perfect harmony with Prof. Stuart, have proved to give *baptizo* the sense of a *causative*; thus *bapto* to dip, *baptos* dipped, *baptizo*

to make to dip, to put any thing into the element, or under the influence of another. In speaking of their classic usage, Prof. Stuart says, "*Bapto* and *baptizo* mean to dip, plunge, or immerse, into any thing liquid. All lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed in this. All other senses" he adds, "are variations from this usual and prevailing signification; i. e., shades of meaning kindred to this, (as happens in respect to most words) some literal and some figurative." Thus "the word *baptizo* means to overwhelm, literally and figuratively in a variety of ways." This, we may add, is the only variation of meaning assigned to *baptizo* in the classics. In the Septuagint and Apocrypha *baptizo* occurs but four times, 2 Kings v. 14; Isaiah xxi. 4; Judith xii. 7; and Sirach xxxi. 25, in the sense of *plunging, overwhelming, and washing the person and clothes.*

Thus far, it will be observed, Prof. Stuart cannot be said to advance any thing to which Baptists in general would object. Whatever they may think of the various shades of meaning he assigns to *bapto*, they regard them by his own showing, as set aside from this controversy; while *baptizo* the only word used in relation to the ordinance of baptism in the New Testament, appears to have had an established and uniform signification in the popular language, literally to immerse, and by an

easy and beautiful metaphor, *to overwhelm as with a flood*. Prof. Stuart gives numerous examples of this common usage; as baptized, (i. e., immersed, overwhelmed, buried,) in a flood tide; in wine; in sleep; in taxes; in excessive labors; in debts; in business; in drunkenness; in sins. He gives among other examples from Chrysostom, the most eloquent of the Greek fathers, the following fine figurative expression: "baptized on all sides by the many waves of business."

In the New Testament, Prof. Stuart first considers the passages where *baptizo* and its derivatives occur literally, but without reference to the ordinances of baptism. Mark vii. 3, 4; Luke xi. 38; Mark vii. 4-8; Heb. ix. 10; all which, as we have already seen, though translated *washing*, afford no evidence whatever against immersion. He next examines the figurative use of *baptizo* in Luke xii. 50; Mark x. 38, 39; Matt. xx. 22, 23; and 1 Cor. xv. 29, which he explains by the classic sense of *overwhelm*; quoting by way of illustration, Ps. lxix. 1-14; xviii. 16; xxxii. 6; xlii. 7. "To Hebrews and Greeks both (he remarks,) the idea of *an overwhelming flood* offered a very obvious image to designate great sorrows and afflictions. Both therefore employ it. Inasmuch now as the more usual idea of *baptizo* is that of *overwhelming, immersing*, it was very natural to em-

ploy it in designating severe calamities and sufferings." He adds, "there is another *figurative* use of *baptizo*, allied in some respects to the preceding one, but distinguished from it in the mode of its application. I mean that usage of the word, which employs it to designate the idea of *copious affusion*, in a figurative manner. The basis of this usage is very plainly to be found in the designation by *baptizo* of the idea of *overwhelming*, i. e., of surrounding on all sides with fluid. For example, Matt. iii. 11, *He shall (baptisei) BAPTIZE you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* See also Luke iii. 16; Mark i. 8; John i. 33; Acts i. 5; xi. 17: 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Prof. Stuart then states the main question, "*Do BAPTIZE and its derivatives, when applied to designate the RITE OF BAPTISM necessarily imply that this rite was performed by IMMERSION of the whole person?*" And for an answer to this question he examines, 1. The general *usus loquendi*; 2. The circumstances of its administration; 3. The Jewish Proselyte Baptism; 4. Ecclesiastical History. It is unnecessary to give, here, any thing more than his general conclusion. "For myself, then, I cheerfully admit, that *baptizo* in the New Testament, when applied to the rite of Baptism, does in all probability involve the idea, that this rite was usually performed by immersion, but not always.

I say *usually*, and *not always*; for to say more than this, the tenor of some of the narratives, particularly in Acts x. 47, 48; xvi. 32, 33; and ii. 41, seem to me to forbid. I cannot read these examples without the distinct conviction that *immersion* was not practised on these occasions, but *washing*, or *affusion*."

To this conclusion the Baptists reply: that to urge *supposed* difficulties against the established meaning of words, is a mode of proceeding arbitrary and unphilosophical—that it introduces endless uncertainty, doubts, quibbles, evasions, disputes, divisions—that this unsound mode of interpretation is the root of Universalist and Unitarian errors—and that until it is abandoned by Protestants, *the unity of the faith* can never be restored, nor the church of Christ *be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*. That in the examples referred to by Prof. Stuart, unless the difficulty actually amounted to an *impossibility*, it would not set aside the established meaning of the word in question—that by his own admission it does not amount to an impossibility—and that whatever be imagined, no positive proof is given of any difficulty at all—that as the Apostles must unavoidably have understood the command to baptize of *immersion*, from uniform and habitual usage, (not one clear case being produced of a

different meaning,) so as conscientious men, they would not feel themselves at liberty to depart from the language of their Master's Commission, in administering it. They further object to the mode in which Prof. Stuart has stated the main question, affirming that in justice they are not bound in every case to prove its meaning anew, and that the burden of proof in such cases, rests entirely on those who deny that it has its usual signification. They say that the true question between them and Prof. Stuart is this : "*Is there any certain evidence in a single case, that baptizo and its derivatives, when applied to designate the Rite of Baptism, mean any thing short of an overwhelming, or immersion ?*"—"Till positive proof of a different meaning is produced," they hold that "all conscientious men are bound to practise immersion, on peril of disobeying an express command of Christ, and of seducing others into the same course of disobedience."—See CARSON ON BAPTISM.

CHAPTER VI.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS QUESTION.

BUT this view of the case introduces another main point of difference—namely: *the Degree of Importance to be attached to the Mode of Baptism.* On the principle of the Baptists, it is evident that what is called the *mode* of baptism is as important as the ordinance itself, neither *more* nor *less*; for if immersion was commanded, nothing but immersion fulfills the command; and to call *pouring* or *sprinkling* of water a *mode of baptism*, is to call it a *mode of immersion*, which is manifestly false and absurd. But on the principles of their opponents, that no particular mode is enjoined, the application of water in any mode or quantity is alike called baptism, and the mode, of course, is looked upon as a matter of indifference. Multitudes of writers, both Catholic and Protestant, have often and fully expressed this latter view of the subject. Calvin, for example, in his celebrated Institutes, says, “It is of no consequence at all, whether the person baptized is totally immersed, or whether he is

merely sprinkled by an affusion of water. This should be a matter of choice to the churches in different regions; although the word *baptize* signifies *to immerse*, and the rite of immersion was practised by the ancient church." Prof. Stuart, after quoting the above words of Calvin, adds, "To this opinion I do most fully and heartily subscribe; not because it is Calvin's, nor because the great majority of Christians have adopted it. I have other, and, I trust, better reasons than either of these; and it is proper that I should now give them.—1. *The rite in question is merely external; and does not therefore enter into the essence of religion.* God who is himself a Spirit requires the homage of our spirits. All else is nothing while this is withheld; and when this is given, all else is *circumstance*, not *essence*.—2. *No injunction is given in the New Testament respecting the manner in which this rite shall be performed.* In this respect it resembles the Lord's Supper, in which no one thinks it necessary to observe precisely the original time, place, posture, or other circumstances. But on Baptist principles, if all these are not observed how is the command of Jesus obeyed, *THIS DO in remembrance of me?* If it be said the command is substantially fulfilled by the use of the appropriate symbolic element of nourishment and refreshment, i. e., bread and wine, the same answer

may be given in relation to baptism. "Is not the substance of baptism," asks Prof. Stuart, "the symbolizing of purity or purification? This, I hope, will not be denied. If, then, water be applied in any such way as to make the symbol or emblem significant or expressive, and highly so, then is the main purpose of the rite answered.—But after the examples which have been adduced of the *significancy of sprinkling*, both from the Old Testament and the New, I consider this significancy as a point made out. The great body of Christians have come to the same conclusion. And it is remarkable that not one of the ancient pictures, so far as I have discovered, represents baptism as performed by *immersion*."—3. *Personal safety and convenience often demand that immersion should be dispensed with ; and therefore at least it cannot well be supposed that it is in all cases necessary.* So thought Cyprian and the ancient church, in relation to cases of sickness. To which may be added, cases where access to water abroad is difficult, dangerous, or impossible ; and where the infirm health of the officiating minister, or of the person to be baptized, forbids the exposure of himself in this way. If it is said, these difficulties can be avoided by the use of baptisteries, I reply, these on Baptist principles are inadmissible, because they are a departure from apostolic usage. Besides it

is notorious that when baptisteries came into use, it was also customary to baptize people naked. If the custom of the ancient church be authoritative as to immersion, why not be consistent and carry it through? On this ground the whole apparatus of ancient superstition might be brought in on the churches of the present day.—If my sentiments go to show my Baptist friends that I believe them to be in error in regard of their zeal about immersion, they show no more than what is matter of fact. I do believe that this is the *sectarianism* of their denomination; and moreover that it does not accord well in this particular with the elevated and spiritual views which, at such a time of light as the present, ought to be cherished. My belief is, that on such excessive attachment to the mere externals of religion, are justly chargeable the divisions and feuds of Christians in relation to the mode of baptism; and that the church never can have peace, until men will cease from the spirit of contention about matters of costume in religion, and leave every one to his own choice in this respect. For one, I believe that the liberty of Christ entitles us to be free from a spirit of zeal for externals; nor do I think it probable that the churches in general will ever be entangled again in such a yoke of bondage. Is not the case of Hezekiah in 2 Chron. xxx. 18–20, fraught with instruction, as to the real

value which the Bible sets upon *externals*? It does seem to me to be so; and I wish my brethren who bar up their communion-table against all who have not been immersed, might study such passages with more attention. It is too late. The Spirit will triumph at last over the flesh; the love of God, and of fellow-Christians redeemed by a Saviour's blood, will burst asunder the manacles of rites and forms, and dispel the charms of sectarian persuasions; and there will yet be in our American churches, 'one Lord, and one faith;' yea, and 'one baptism' also, inasmuch as variety of mode will no longer be regarded as infringing upon the unity of this rite."

To this the Baptists reply: That a less lofty tone would appear more becoming in the advocates of *an acknowledged innovation*; especially when it is considered that the innovation began in the corrupt and apostate Church of Rome, and that it yet remains to be determined at a higher tribunal, whether the divine Author of the institution will justify the change. That for their part, they have not the slightest wish to bind the conscience of any one, where Christ has left it free; but that the very point in question is, whether the command of Christ is not binding on the conscience of all his disciples, in relation to *immersion*. That though the reasons for substituting *sprinkling* under the

cover of the original name, may seem sufficient to their brethren, they not only have a *right* to examine them, but that it is a *duty* to do so ; and, if not convinced beyond a doubt of their validity, they are bound by their love to their erring brethren, no less than by their fidelity to Christ, to protest against them ; meekly indeed, but earnestly ; prudently, no doubt, but still perseveringly, publicly, and frankly. That if their brethren think it right to plead so warmly for mere custom or convenience, it seems not quite brotherly to affix the stigma of *sectarianism* on those who plead purely for the sake of a good conscience, and for the honor of their common Lord, that *in the beginning it was not so*. At least, they ask an impartial hearing of their reasons for believing that such a change of a divine institution is not a matter of indifference, but morally wrong, and fraught with a deep and dread responsibility in the sight of Him who ordained the institution.

For, 1. Although the rite of baptism be *external*, yet the simple fact that it is divinely commanded, proves that its observance enters into the *essence* of a Christian's obedience. *If ye love me*, says the Saviour, *keep my commandments*.—2. If “the word *baptize* signifies to *immerse*,” as both Calvin and Prof. Stuart agree, then so far from there being no injunction in the New Testament as to the

mode of symbolic purification, there is such an injunction just as often as there is an injunction to *baptize*. The case of the Lord's Supper furnishes no evidence to the contrary; since it is clear that when our Saviour said: "THIS DO in remembrance of me," he referred simply to the specific *act* enjoined in commemoration of his life-giving sacrifice; and not to the *accidental circumstances* in which it was performed. In like manner, when he gave commission to baptize, he enjoined simply the act of immersion in the most glorious of names, as a symbol of that purification from sin, and consecration to God, which is effected, not partially, but thoroughly in every believer, through his death, burial, and resurrection. He did not say simply, *purify them by water*, and by so doing leave his disciples to their own choice concerning the mode; but he said definitely, *baptize* them, and it is conceded that the word *baptize* signifies to *immerse*. All nations, all ages, were before Him. His eye looked to every possible case that could arise in the long course of a world's conversion, yet He said concerning them all, *immerse* them. This then is the law of Christ. There is no other. Our duty is discharged by receiving it as it is, and obeying it. The place, the time, the circumstances, even the mode of the immersion, are not prescribed; but the immersion itself as a solemn and expressive

symbol, not merely of consecration to God in general, but of *the Christian manner of consecration to God through Christ*, is specifically prescribed. Hence the specific appeal founded on it, in Rom. vi. 1-14-23; which on any other view of the subject is null and void. *That specific significancy*, sprinkling does not, and cannot, supply; nor does even Prof. Stuart attempt to do it; since his whole argument comes to this only, that water, however applied, is expressive of purification. This may be admitted, without advancing one step in the proof that immersion, under the Christian law, is unnecessary, useless, or uncommanded. For had the Saviour preferred sprinkling, He would have said, not *baptize*, but *rantize*, which Prof. Stuart knows is the Greek word always used in the New Testament to signify *sprinkling*. See Heb. ix. 13-19-21; x. 22; xii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 2. We are not called to construct a new symbol, but to conform to one already prescribed by a better wisdom than ours.—If human authority were at all admissible in deciding on the question of *significancy*, the Baptists could appeal to the highest names in Christendom as deciding it in favor of immersion. The free-hearted child and the ingenuous critic, alike feel and confess this. And as to the pictures of baptism mentioned by Prof. Stuart, a solution is furnished by Mr. Robinson, who quotes authorities to

show that these are but pictorial or fanciful modes of representing a *total immersion*.—3. Baptists do not deny that personal convenience and safety may be lawfully consulted in the administration of baptism; provided only that it is baptism itself, i. e., the *immersion* of a professed believer, which is administered. They do not, (as Prof. Stuart appears to do through his whole argument,) confound the *rite prescribed*, with the *circumstances* in which it is performed. They have always held, as Tertullian has well expressed it, that “there is no difference, whether any one is washed in a pool, river, lake, or canal; nor is there any difference of consequence between those whom John immersed in the Jordan, or Peter in the Tiber.” On their principles a bath or a baptistery is a perfectly lawful place of baptism; since Christ has left his Church perfectly free in relation to the circumstances in which the immersion He prescribed shall be performed. No matter where or what the place in which the necessary element is found, *if thou believest with all thine heart* (EXESTIN,) IT IS LAWFUL.—Nor are they responsible for any indecorums, or superstitious practices, in the churches of Greece or Rome in the fourth century, as they hold nothing of the kind, and look not to those corrupt churches for authority, but to the SCRIPTURES alone. Much less are they “chargeable with the divisions and

feuds of Christians in relation to the mode of baptism," as Prof. Stuart supposes; since the burden of that charge, in all justice, belongs, not to those who conscientiously contend for the *primitive mode*, but to those who contend for a *change* on the principles of expediency.—That intemperate zeal has sometimes been manifested on both sides is very probable; but that zeal for the purity of divine worship, *even in things external*, is not offensive to GOD, is evident from the example of Him who said, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*.—For their own part, they have no more doubt, (notwithstanding any opinion to the contrary,) that the followers of the Redeemer will yet return to the practice of immersion than they have of the truth of Him who has said; *Every plant that my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up*. Meanwhile they will continue from the heart to pray, as they have long prayed, in the spirit of King Hezekiah, *The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek GOD, the LORD GOD of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary*.—So far from "barring up their communion table," they view it as truly the Lord's, and open to all who come in the way he has appointed. And they think it one thing to pray for the pardon of their erring brethren, and another to sanc-

tion their error, and thus become *partakers of other men's sins*.

Of the justness of the views and arguments on both sides, let every one judge for himself, upon due inquiry, in the fear of GOD.

CHAPTER VII.

VIEWS OF DRS. PETERS AND BEECHER.

SINCE the foregoing little work was first prepared, there has been an attempt made, especially in New England, to give a new phase to the Baptismal Question by a publication of the Rev. Absalom Peters, D. D., (formerly Editor of the *American Eclectic*, and of the *American Biblical Repository*; now of Williamstown, Mass.,) entitled "Sprinkling the only Scriptural Mode of Baptism." Of this publication, however, we can only say, in the kindest manner, that it sheds no new light whatever on the controversy. "What is *new* is not true, and what is *true* is not new." It has been effectually answered by Rev. J. Torrey Smith.

An effort of far higher order has been put forth by Rev. Edward Beecher, D. D., formerly President of Illinois College, now of Boston. President Beecher rejects all previous views as unsatisfactory, because not comprehensive of all the facts, necessary to a true solution of the problem involved in the meaning of βαπτισμός, (*baptizo*); and concludes

that all the conditions to a final settlement of this vexed question unite in giving it the sense of *purify*. To sustain this view he has amassed a rich treasure of erudition, especially from the Greek fathers, and has employed an amount of exegetical tact, logical skill, and rhetorical beauty, rarely if ever displayed on the question in this country. In point of sheer ability, it seems to us immeasurably before all other works on the Podo-baptist side of the question.

What then is its defect? The want of a solid foundation. The new theory is a perfect illusion. The whole secret appears to lie in *a casual, but unsound association of ideas*, grounded originally upon the passage in John iii. 25, 26. Explanatory words are not always *equivalent* in meaning; the one may be a *generic* sense, the other *specific*; hence to hold them as equivalent on the strength of a single passage, in defiance of the clearest common usage, is simply absurd. This false association, however, once fixed in the mind, acts like a magnetic force upon fine machinery, in disturbing the judgment, and imposing a false theory upon the imagination, which colors all facts, and connects them together, in unreal combinations. This is the case with Dr. Beecher's theory. Men of cooler, sober judgment, though leaning to the same side of the question, and wishing to defend it, see

through the fallacy of his main position, and do not hesitate to say with Prof. Stuart of Andover, "The theory is very beautiful; but *it wants bottom.*"

The theory thus characterized by Prof. Stuart, has been exposed with some severity by Dr. Carson, in his great work on Baptism, and since that severity has been urged by Dr. Beecher to parry the effect of the argument, it will better harmonize with the impartiality of purpose in the "Baptismal Balance," here to insert the views of the most elegant if not the most erudite critic whom this controversy has recently called forth in Great Britain. I refer to the Rev. Robert Wilson, Professor of Sacred Literature in the Royal College, Belfast, Ireland, selected by the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster to answer Dr. Carson. His work appeared in London, in 1848, in a handsome octavo of 532 pages. I quote from pages 182-185."

"On a first inspection the case seems strong for President Beecher, and the entire class of purifiers, who certainly occupy a respectable position in the baptismal controversy. But whatever may be its apparent strength, we apprehend it labors under *the fatal defect of a want of evidence*. We are able to produce what we conceive to be decisive instances of the use of βαπτίζω, (*baptizo*), where there is and can be no immersion; but never, even in a

solitary instance, have we encountered it in the sense of 'purification.' That meaning, as it appears to us, cannot be extracted from the verb, without recourse to questionable analogies and reasonings, which betray a larger measure of theological ingenuity than of philological 'acumen. The case on behalf of 'purification,' we think, therefore, might be equitably disposed of by the Scottish verdict of 'not proven;' thus leaving the way perfectly open for the reception of any new evidence, which its advocates may have it in their power to bring forward. That their writings contain some striking illustrations of the sense for which they contend, is freely admitted; but we are not aware that they have hitherto succeeded in *proving* by clear examples, the existence of that sense, and thus constructing a legitimate basis for their illustrations.

"We have been led to view the question in a considerably different light. Purification, in our judgment, is not baptism; though it may be, and often is, the immediate result of baptism. A contrary result, however, far from being impracticable, we find occasionally exemplified, as in *Aquila's* translation of Job x. 31, *Εν διαφθορα βαπτίζεις με*, "Thou baptizest me in corruption." One such instance, even apart from the obvious nature of the case, proves that the result will be defilement or purification, according to the character

of the baptizing element. Consequently, if we would avoid the absurdity of attaching opposite meanings to the same term, we must employ the verb to denote simply the *process*, without including the result, which is necessarily implied in purification.

“With this distinction the usage of the Greek language appears to be strictly harmonious. Whether the baptizing element overwhelms its object, or simply opens to receive it, or presents any other variety of application, a certain process takes place, which may issue in great diversity of result, the result to be collected from the context, or the general circumstances of each occurrence.”

Such is the luminous and candid opinion of perhaps the highest living philological authority in Great Britain on the Pedobaptist side of this question.

CHAPTER VIII.

SCRIPTURAL DESIGN OF BAPTISM.

A DUE regard to the doctrinal import and design of this New Testament ordinance would probably go farther than all the learning and ingenuity which have been employed in managing the controversy on either side, to establish the mind of an inquirer, both as to the proper subjects and mode of administration. For it is plain that the value of signs depends chiefly upon the importance of the things signified. And as Dr. Owen observes, "There is nothing in Religion that hath any efficiency for compassing an end, but it hath it from God's appointment of it to that purpose. God may, in his wisdom, appoint and accept of ordinances and duties unto one end, which he will refuse and reject when they are applied to another. To do any thing appointed unto an end, without aiming at that end, is no better than the not doing it at all, in some cases much worse." The *design* of baptism, therefore, as taught in the New Testament, and the *practical uses* to which it is there

applied, ought to be thoroughly investigated by both ministers and people ; in order that they may know and comply with the revealed intention of God in its appointment.

“It is generally agreed among divines,” says the learned Venema, “that the communion of a believer with Christ, and the effects of his obedience by which the guilt, the pollution, and the punishment of sin, are taken away, and so the remission of sin, sanctification, and glorification are conferred, are presented to view in baptism ; yet they do not sufficiently show the way and manner in which that representation is made, and frequently speak with but little consistency. If in baptism, the appearance of nothing but *washing* presented itself to our consideration, the thing would be easy. For seeing we are delivered from sin by the obedience of Christ, that would be readily understood by every one as the cause of our purification, and as represented by water, in which there is a cleansing virtue ; especially as the Scripture usually comprehends it under the emblem of water. But washing is neither the only idea, nor, as I think, the principal one of this institution.”

The principal and most comprehensive design of this ordinance appears from the Scriptures to be
A SOLEMN, PUBLIC, AND PRACTICAL PROFESSION
OF CHRISTIANITY. Thus Paul sums up the Bap-

tism of John in Acts xix. 4. "John verily baptized with the baptism of REPENTANCE, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on CHRIST JESUS." And thus he describes his own. Gal. iii. 27. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, HAVE PUT ON CHRIST." To the same purpose are the words of Peter on the day of Pentecost; "Repent, and be baptized every one of you IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST." Hence also a rejection of baptism, is by our Lord called a REJECTION OF THE COUNSEL OF GOD, that is, of Christianity. Luke vii. 30; Acts xx. 27. And the reception of baptism is represented as the act by which we JUSTIFY GOD; that is, practically approve His method of salvation by faith in the Messiah. Luke vii. 29.—Hence whatever may be said of baptism as it is now generally understood and practised, and of the personal religion of those who practise it, it is certain that *it was originally appointed to be the boundary of visible Christianity.*

But this general design of baptism comprehends many particulars. Christianity consists partly of truths to be believed, partly of precepts to be obeyed, and partly of promises to be hoped for; and this its initiatory ordinance is rich in significancy in relation to them all. We are taught to regard it:

1. AS THE SOLEMN PROFESSION OF OUR FAITH IN

THE HOLY TRINITY. John i. 33; Matt. iii. 16, 17; xxviii. 19; Ephes. ii. 18; Tit. iii. 4-7,—particularly—*of our adoption by the Father*. Gal. iii. 26-29; iv. 1-7; John i. 12, 13; 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18; 1 John iii. 1-3,—*of our union to the Son*. Acts viii. 35-39; Rom. vi. 3-14; Col. ii. 12, 13-20; iii. 1-11; Matt. xx. 22, 23; 1 Pet. iii. 18-22; 1 Cor. i. 30,—*of our sanctification by the Spirit*. John iii. 5-8; vii. 37-39; xiv. 15-17: 26, 27; xvi. 12-15; Acts ii. 38, 39; Rom. viii. 1-27; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; Gal. iii. 2, 3; iv. 6, 7; v. 22-25; Ephes. i. 11-14; iv. 30; v. 9.—2. *As the PUBLIC PLEDGE OF THE RENUNCIATION, AND REMISSION OF SINS*. Mark i. 4, 5; Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16; Rom. vi. 4.—3. *AS THE EXPRESSION OF OUR HOPE OF A FUTURE AND GLORIOUS RESURRECTION*. Rom. vi. 5; Col. iii. 1-4; 1 Cor. xv. 29.—4. *AS A VISIBLE BOND OF UNION AMONG CHRISTIANS*. 1 Cor. xii. 3-31; Ephes. iv. 5. Baptism, therefore, is designed to give a sort of epitome of the whole system of Christianity.

CHAPTER IX.

PERPETUITY OF THE LAW OF BAPTISM.

ALTHOUGH Christians have been generally agreed that Baptism was delivered to the primitive churches as an ordinance of universal and perpetual obligation, yet there have been some, and two bodies of Christians in particular, who have, on different grounds, denied or questioned its perpetuity—QUAKERS and ANTI-BAPTISTS.—The first class consider all external forms, in which they include Baptism and the Lord's Supper, rather as obstructions than aids to spiritual worship; and hence interpret the Apostolic Commission either of Baptism with the Holy Ghost, or limit its duration to the close of the Jewish economy, as being rather a part of the Baptism of John than of Christ. They quote, in favor of these views, Matt. iii. 11; John iii. 30: 1 Cor. xii. 13; Ephes. iv. 5; and 1 Cor. i. 17. The second class derive their opinion chiefly from the supposition that Christian Baptism is a continuation of Jewish Proselyte Baptism; from which they argue that it ought not to be administered to any but converted Pagans, Mahomedans,

and others who did not previously receive Christianity as the true religion.

Both of these classes of Christians have been requested to consider :—1. That the Apostles themselves understood their Commission of *baptizing in water* ; as is clear from their practice recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.—2. That to *baptize with the Holy Ghost*, or put the soul under his divine influence, is the prerogative of Christ alone. John i. 33 ; viii. 37–39 ; Acts i. 4–8 ; ii. 1–4.—3. That so far from regarding the Baptism of the Spirit as superseding the Baptism of Water, Peter, in the house of Cornelius, urges it as a divine evidence of the propriety of the latter ; *Who can forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.* Acts x.—4. That this therefore is “the one baptism ; to which the Apostle refers as being a visible bond of union among Christians ; the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, (superior as it is in importance,) being so called, not literally, but by a rich and beautiful metaphor, indicating the overwhelming abundance of his holy influences and endowments. *Be ye filled with the Spirit.* Ephes. v. 18 ; John vii. 37–39.—5. That the Christian Law of Baptism could not have been derived from that of Jewish Proselytes ; because

many such Proselytes were baptized, as the Ethiopian Eunuch, Cornelius, and others, which proves either that the Christian administrators knew no such custom as Proselyte Baptism, or that they re-baptized those who had received it.—6. That the Apostles in their writings drew from the baptism of their converts the most powerful motives to a life of spiritual holiness.—7. That our Lord himself honored the ordinance by his own example; and that while it is safe to obey and imitate him, it must be dangerous to set aside or slight *even the least* of his commandments. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* John xv. 14. *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* John xiv. 21. Lastly. Christians are exhorted to *hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering, and to draw nigh to the throne of grace, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water*; which they cannot do unless baptized. Heb. x. 22, 23. Whence it follows that baptism in water, however, and to whomsoever it is to be administered, is a Christian ordinance of perpetual obligation.

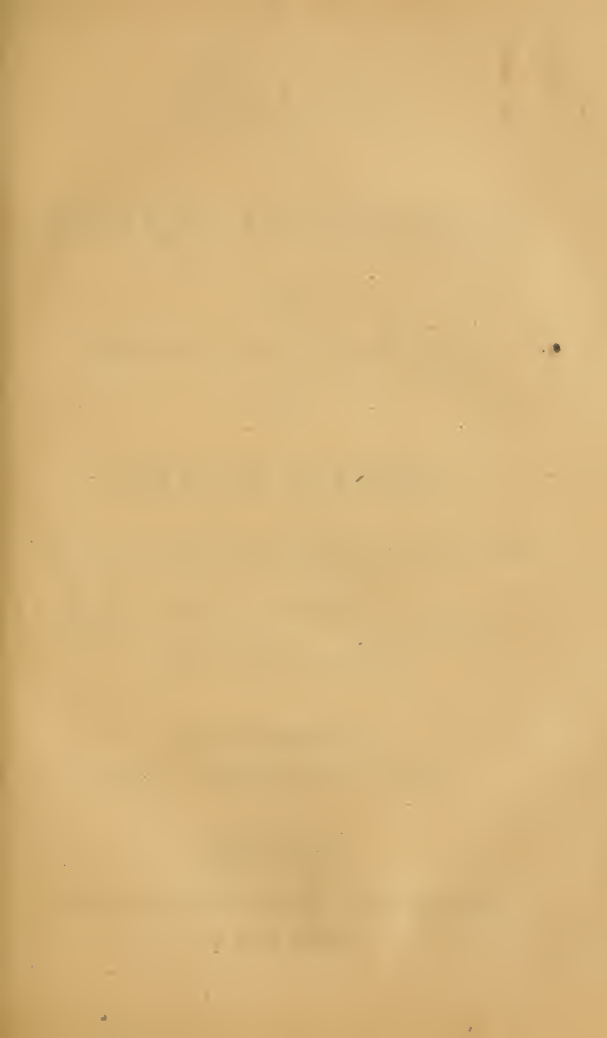
Others have stated the argument thus:—We have seen that Christianity and its laws are of perpetual obligation—that baptism is a part of Christianity in its complete form—that the example of

Christ in this particular is binding on all his disciples, through all ages—that the perpetuity of baptism is implied in the nature of the ordinance, as an act of worship, a monument of the Saviour's death, burial and resurrection, a symbol of the renunciation of sin, and the new birth to righteousness, a solemn self-dedication to the Saviour, a public recognition of our adoption as the children of God, and of our hope of a glorious resurrection—that the promise connected with the institution prophetically declares its perpetuity—that baptism is inwrought in the law of the institution with some other things which are acknowledged to be of perpetual obligation, as teaching and believing—and that the apostles understood it to be perpetual, and derived from it motives to holiness, which are now powerless upon any other supposition than that the ordinance is still to be regarded. Now in view of all these things what shall we say? Can further evidence be necessary?

If there be any who still doubt the perpetual obligation of the ordinance, we would respectfully put to them the following questions: Is there in the law of the institution any thing which appears to *limit* the obligation to obedience to time, or place, or nation? Is not the language of the Commission as exempt as language can be, from all such limitations? Was this law ever *repealed*

by the same authority which enacted it? If it were, it can certainly be shown when, and where, and how; and we ask for the evidence.—We ask again, Has it (as the seventh day Sabbath has,) been *virtually repealed*, by being superseded by another ordinance? If so, what is its name? and whence its origin? and where its authority? We ask once more, Do not the *same reasons exist for its continuance*, as did for its *appointment*? Miraculous gifts were a seal to the commission—they accredited the apostles as messengers of God; but now the proof of the divine origin of Christianity is complete, and the miraculous powers have ceased. They have ceased, because the same reason for which they were given, does not continue. But the same *doctrinal* and the same *practical* uses of baptism continue; and why should the ordinance be laid aside? Why should it be regarded by any disciple of the crucified Saviour as antiquated, or obsolete? *Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism in the likeness of his death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.* Rom. vi. 4, 5.

P. S. The most eminent writers on the Pedobaptist side of this controversy are, *Wall, Henry, Bradbury, Bostwick, Towgood, Addington, Williams, Edwards, Miller, Evans, Ewing, Wardlaw, Worcester, Austin, Anderson, Dwight, Pond, Moore, Arnold, Walker, Beckwith, Woods, Stuart, Beecher, &c.* And on the Baptist side, *Gale, Gill, Stennet, Booth, Robinson, Huldane, McLean, Pengilly, Wilson, Fuller, Carson, Cox, Baldwin, Merrill, Chapin, Frey, Loomis, Judson, Foster, Sharp, Chase, Ripley, Warne, Hague, Turney, Howell, Jewett, Remington, R. Fuller, &c.*





SEVEN LETTERS
TO THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,
ON THE
PERPETUITY, SUBJECTS, AND MODE,
OF THE
RITE OF BAPTISM.

WITH NUMEROUS EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF EMINENT AUTHORS
BELONGING TO THE SOCIETY, FROM

Robert Barclay and William Penn
DOWN TO LIVING WRITERS.

BY R. PENGILLY,
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P R E F A C E .

THE Writer of these Letters asks not to be judged till he is heard, and heard *to the end*. He conscientiously believes that his reasoning is in harmony with the Scriptures. If any reader shall think otherwise, and point out unscriptural sentiments, he will, without delay, renounce these sentiments, and cheerfully embrace the truth, the moment that object appears to his mind.

The principal portion of these Letters is upon the question of the *Perpetuity* of water baptism. On the *Subjects* and the *Mode*, it is not so extensive; as he found so many eminent writers belonging to the Society of Friends ready to concur upon these two points: and it is upon these chiefly (to which his last two Letters relate) that he has quoted from Friends.

May that Divine Spirit whose office it is to "guide into all truth," so attend the perusal of these Letters, that so far, and so far only, as they present "the truth as it is in Jesus" to the attention of the reader, they may assist him to understand and embrace it! This is the utmost desire of the writer, and that *desire* no one will condemn.

R. P.

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INTRODUCTION.

SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANITY, as distinguished from FORMALISM, is, in the esteem of every truly enlightened mind, of transcendent importance. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Any attempt, then, *to substitute the forms for the power of godliness*, even if those forms were undeniably of Divine origin and obligation, would be an attempt to 'subvert the soul!' as well as to rob God of his rightful claims to the heart. Such an attempt must be looked upon by every one possessed of spiritual discernment with a deep concern, a sort of horror and indignation, mingled with contempt and disgust; unless, indeed, these last feelings were swallowed up in pity for the deceiving and the deceived.

But no such attempt is made in this book. The Author, now venerable in years and mellowed wisdom, is a deeply humble, but able defender of SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANITY. He pleads for no forms, no ritual observances, no outward symbols, as substitutes for the religion of a truly regenerated heart. He pleads for nothing on the ground of general tradition, or human expediency. He pleads only for obedience to the commandments of Jesus Christ; commandments radiant with a higher wisdom than man's, linked with a more awful authority, embodied in more sacred examples, endeared by a "love that passeth knowledge," and established as tests of our sincere, full, devoted love to Him. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." And even *these* express commandments of Christ are not put forward as of *primary* importance. Others are held as of earlier and more indispensable obligation—such

as repentance, faith, judgment, mercy, and the love of God. "These ought ye to have done, and not to have left the others undone."

These Letters are addressed to the Friends, especially those among them who believe in the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures, in the Authority of our Saviour's teachings, in the redemption wrought out for us on the Cross, and its effectual application by the power of the Holy Spirit. To any others, the Author would deem the entire discussion as inappropriate, as it must be uninteresting. Even were such convinced by his "reasoning out of the Scriptures," the correction of their lifeless notions would seem but a sad and hopeless office, like that of straightening the limbs of the dead. But to the living spiritual believer, (of whom there are many in the Society,) this discussion cannot be void of interest, for it touches the will of the Lord towards us; and they know who has said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven." And not only are their hearts silently waiting on Him at all times for the slightest intimations of His will, but they hold themselves in readiness through His grace, when discovered, to obey it.

No Friend can take up these Letters without perceiving that they are written in a friendly spirit; with Christian simplicity of aim, clearness and force of reasoning, thorough knowledge of the word, and singular calmness, candor and sweetness of soul. The careful citations from the writings of the Friends will show how earnest is his desire to do justice to their views and arguments, and to persuade only through real evidence and vital conviction. May no reader read in vain.

J. N. B.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 10, 1851.

LETTERS
TO THE
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

LETTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

MY DEAR FRIENDS:

THE question, Whether the ordinances of Jesus Christ, 'Baptism and the Lord's Supper,' were intended by him to be *continued* in his Church until he came; or only for a few years, till his followers should understand the true nature of his Kingdom among men,—is one of great interest and importance. This question is exciting in some portions of your Society, at the present period, a considerable degree of attention. Many view it as deserving, and are inclined to give it a more serious consideration than they have hitherto bestowed upon it; and surely no one can blame such persons, if the object of their solicitude is, simply, to KNOW AND TO DO THE WILL OF CHRIST.

Let not this circumstance give your Society a moment's uneasiness. Divine truth has nothing to fear from investigation. It will lose nothing of its excellence and glory by being brought to the severest test of examination. On the contrary, it invites to that test, and commends a spirit of rigid inquiry and of diligent search. "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good," is a Divine command. It is only error that dreads investigation.

The writer of this letter long ago humbly endeavored, for himself, to seek the mind of the Supreme Head of the Church upon the question referred to. He had nothing to gain nor much to lose, pertaining to this world, by the decision to which he might come. But avowing Christ as his only Master; and believing, if he was his Master, it became him as a servant to do the will of his Lord, his inquiry and his prayer was, with the converted Saul, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?"

That Christ required, and does still require, his servants *to obey his Commandments*, no believer of the New Testament can for a moment doubt. "If ye love me (said he) keep my Commandments."* "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"† "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."‡ The apostles were required by Christ's final charge to them never to forget his demand upon the obedience of his people: "Go, disciple all nations—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;" and the promise to encourage their obedience follows, "and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."§

But what is to be the guide of an inquirer with regard to the will of Christ? Where is the Christian to learn the mind of his Lord,—and who will so instruct him, that he shall be morally certain, that, in the obedience he attempts to render, he is actually doing what Christ would have him to do? To this important inquiry no safe answer can be given but in the words of Jesus, "Search the Scrip-

* John xiv. 15, 21, 23.

† Matt. vii. 21.

‡ Luke vi. 46.

§ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

tures,—they are they that testify of me.”* Christ made his will known to his Apostles, and they in teaching his will and in writing it for the guide of the Church in after ages, were graciously promised by their Redeemer, the infallible aid of the Holy Spirit; “He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”†

Prayer is proper,—consultation with well-instructed Christians is becoming—the perusal of the writings of judicious, pious, and talented authors, bearing upon the subject, is commendable; but recourse may be had to all these, and yet, if the Scriptures be neglected, the grossest errors may be retained; or new errors imbibed. All men, not under that measure of Divine Inspiration enjoyed by the prophets and apostles, are *liable* to egregious error, of which we have, alas! too many examples in the professing world to render proof necessary. But what those “holy men, moved by the Holy Ghost,”‡ wrote for our instruction in things pertaining to our duty to God and the way of Salvation, must be *unerring truth*, and infallibly contain the mind of God concerning us. No other source of instruction is certain: thus the Divine Spirit addresses us, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”§ “The Holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto Salvation.” They are “given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”||

Nor dare we *alter*, or *explain away*, or add to, or

* John v. 39.

‡ Isa. viii. 20.

† John xiv. 26.

|| 2 Tim. iii. 15, 17.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 21.

take from, the will of our heavenly Master as given in his word. "Every word of God is pure...add thou not unto his words lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."* Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it."† "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life."‡

With such views of the Holy Scriptures, and their paramount and irresistible authority, the writer of these pages humbly endeavored to learn from thence the Divine mind regarding the two ordinances enjoined in the New Testament; and the decision he came to he has never yet regretted, though many years have since rolled over his head, and those years attended with a considerable portion of reading and reflection upon this subject.

The ordinance of CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, or, as it is called by the Society of Friends, to distinguish it from the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, WATER BAPTISM, will occupy the following pages. There are THREE points to which I solicit the serious attention of my Readers, namely the PERPETUITY, the SUBJECTS, and the MODE of this Ordinance; and these shall occupy my future Letters.

* Prov. xxx. 5, 6.

† Deut. iv. 2.

‡ Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

LETTER II.

THE MINISTRY AND BAPTISM OF JOHN PROVED TO BE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION, AND NOT A PART OF THE MOSAIC.

MY DEAR FRIENDS :

You are aware that the general opinion maintained in your Society upon this subject is, 'That the rite of Baptism is of Jewish origin, a ceremony in practice under the Old Testament; that to that dispensation the ministry of John the Baptist belonged; that his baptism was not an institution *first enjoined upon, and first administered by him*, but copied or continued by him from the usual practice of the Jews; and that Jesus Christ and his apostles observed the rite of Baptism in the same way, merely as a Jewish ordinance; and so far as it was continued by the apostles it was in condescension to the weakness of Jewish converts.

From these premises the Friends draw this conclusion, 'That, as the Old Testament dispensation, with all its rites and ceremonies, was to be done away upon the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, and to give place to the SPIRITUAL KINGDOM which the Messiah was to set up, so of course the ordinance of Baptism, being an Old Testament rite, must be abolished and cease, when the spiritual reign of Jesus shall be established, and its spirituality understood. Thus:—

ELISHA BATES. "It appears that John's ministry belonged to the typical and shadowy dispensation.—And as no *abrogation* of types and shadows took place till the crucifixion of Christ, so the observance of John's baptism, in common with the other rituals of

that dispensation, was to be expected to continue till that important period.

“He (that is, Chris) ended that typical dispensation in his own, which was of a pure and spiritual nature. There was a peculiar propriety in this; for these typical rites and ceremonies being of Divine appointment, their force or obligation lasted till the new covenant dispensation was completely introduced; which did not take place till the Great Sacrifice was completed. Here their obligation ended, but they were continued IN CONDESCENSION, a considerable time after their obligation had ceased.”*—*The Doctrine of Friends*. Chap. xi. pp. 210-214.

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY. “On a fair examination of the history of those ceremonies (water-baptism and the Eucharist), we find that they not only appertain to the *principle* of the old covenant, but were practices observed on that principle by the Jews themselves before the introduction of the Christian revelation. Thus it appears that they actually formed a part of the ritual system of Judaism itself: and since it is on all hands allowed that the whole of that ritual system, although observed for many years after the death of Jesus by most of his immediate disciples, is nevertheless null and void under the Christian dispensation, we appear to be brought to a sound conclusion, that in connection with the worship of Christians the ceremonies in question are rightly disused.”—*Observations on the Religious Peculiarities of the Society of Friends*. Ch. iv. pp. 78-9.

The whole of this is not only unsupported by evidence, but is contrary to the plain statements of the New Testament. I shall endeavor to maintain the negative of these opinions, and then adduce scriptural reasons for the Perpetuity of this ordi-

* This respected Author has since changed his views, and has been baptized; but the sentiments above are generally, if not universally, held by the Society.

nance. I must necessarily be brief in my remarks,—shall refer to eminent authors in support of them, and leave the subject to the serious reflections of the Reader. In reply therefore, I beg to state—

1. John's Ministry did not belong to "the typical and shadowy dispensation" of the law; that he was immediately sent from God with a new commission, as much as Moses was; that his ministry contained no portion of the ritual law, but the pure gospel of Jesus, and that the intention of it was to direct his hearers FROM THE LAW TO CHRIST.

Three things were the chief themes of John's ministry, (1.) Repentance toward God. (2.) Faith in the coming Saviour, and (3.) Christ's sacrifice the means of taking away sin;—and hence the unspeakable blessing of the forgiveness of sins without the deeds of the law to them that repent and believe. By insisting upon these subjects, and by baptizing upon a reception of them, he was to "prepare the way of the Lord" as the prophets had foretold, and as Gabriel more plainly declared, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord," that is, for Christ, who was in a few months to follow him. For this work John was a special messenger raised up, "sent of God," "filled with the Holy Ghost," and to whom "the word of God came" by special and immediate revelation. Hear the testimony of the inspired word:—

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John;" and "the word of the Lord came unto John in the wilderness, and he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* "John preached the baptism of repentance to all the

* Compare Mat. iii. 1, 6. Luke i. 13, 17. iii. 1. 9. John i. 6, 7; and the Prophets, Isa. xl. 3. Mal. iii. 1.

people of Israel,—saying unto the people, that they should believe on him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”* “John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,” “And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith Behold the Lamb of God.”† See more fully the references below, and on the preceding page.

Without quoting further, I ask, is this, my respected Friends, preaching the law? Is it a ministry that “belonging to the typical and shadowy dispensation?” Is not this the gospel which Christ required his apostles to preach to all nations, as free from the works of the law, bearing as much and as exclusively upon the heart; as spiritual, and as full of Christ? Compare John’s faithful addresses to the Jews generally, and to the Pharisees who depended on the works of the law in particular, with the preaching of Peter in Acts ii. and iii.; and Paul’s in Acts xiii. and you will find them one and the same.

Had John been under the law and subject to its authority, instead of directing the conscious sinner to “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,” he must have instructed him to ‘bring his offering for the sin he had committed unto the priest, who should slay it for a sin-offering, and make an atonement for him.’‡ Instead of this legal instruction John points immediately to Christ as the only Saviour of sinners; *and never in a single instance required obedience to the ritual law of Moses, or the observance of any of its ordinances*, as what God required of them who received his ministry. In demanding of his hearers the ‘fruits of repentance,’ and exhorting them to ‘believe in

* Acts xiii. 24. xix. 4.

† John i. 29, 36.

‡ See Levit. iv. and v.; John i. 37, 42.

Christ' as the only Saviour "that taketh away the sin of the world;" and at the same time, exploding all the vain hopes of those who trusted they were righteous by keeping the law, he preached pure Christianity; that Christianity to introduce which into the world "it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead;" for this was, as he says himself, "that repentance and remission of sins in his name among all nations:" Luke xxiv. 46, 47. And though farther revelations of the truth were to be made by the Redeemer after John had quitted this world, and still farther by the apostles when their Saviour had ascended, and they had received the Holy Ghost; yet, as far as John's preaching went it was the opening of the pure gospel of Jesus;—it was the morning of the gospel day,—the first pure light of the Sun of the New Testament dispensation. Hence we find that they who received John's ministry were presently turned over to Christ as "a people prepared for the Lord." Thus:—

MR. SCOTT. "With the ministry of John the New Testament dispensation began to be introduced, and the Kingdom of heaven preached."—*Comment. on Matt. xi. 12.*

DR. DOODRIDGE. "This very demand of repentance showed that it was a spiritual Kingdom, and that no wicked man, how learned or renowned soever, could possibly be a genuine member of it."—*Fam. Expos. Note, under § 15.*

But I would refer my Readers to two express testimonies of Scripture upon this subject.

First. Mark introduces his history of Christ, by describing John's labors, and these labors he calls "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ; as it is written in the prophets, Behold I, send my

messenger before thy face," &c. Mark i. 1, 2. Upon this passage I introduce the observations of two esteemed Commentators:—

DR. ADAM CLARKE. "*The beginning of the gospel.*] It is with the utmost propriety that Mark begins the gospel dispensation by the preaching of John the Baptist, he being the forerunner of Jesus Christ, and the first proclaimer of the incarnated Messiah."—*In loc.*

MATTHEW HENRY. "In John's preaching there was the beginning of the gospel doctrine. (1.) He preached the *remission of sins*, which is the greatest gospel privilege. (2.) He preached *repentance* in order to it. 'Repentance and remission of sins' were what the apostles were commanded to preach 'to all nations.' Luke xiv. 47. (3.) He preached CHRIST, and directed to expect him speedily to appear. The preaching of Christ is pure gospel, and that was John the Baptist's preaching."—*Expos.* on Mark i. 1-8.

Second. The second passage of the New Testament I shall adduce, appears to me quite decisive. It comes from the lips of the Supreme HEAD of the Church. "The law and the prophets (said our Lord) were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." Luke xvi. 16. On the passage,

DR. HAMMOND remarks, "The prophets continued till John, not including him in that number, but referring him to the higher classis of a forerunner of Christ, or a preacher of the gospel; for so it follows, 'From that time, the Kingdom of God,' that is, Christianity, is preached."—*Annot.* on Matt. xi.

That our blessed Saviour did not intend by 'the Kingdom of God,' the ministry of the 'shadowy dispensation' is surely too evident by his common use of the phrase to need any proof: and that he did intend 'the gospel' is sufficiently clear by his setting it in contradistinction to the law and the

prophets, and as succeeding to them. In order of *time*, John's ministry was *intermediate*, between the law and Christ; but upon the question, Was he a teacher of the Mosaic System, or a teacher of Christianity? Did he teach the law of Moses, or preach the gospel of Christ? I conceive no doubt can now remain upon the reader's mind, after perusing the above evidences.

2. John's Baptism was not the continuation of a rite practised by the Jews before his appearance but an ordinance of Divine institution, and first enjoined upon and practised by John.

It is true that under the law there were enjoined upon the Jews "divers washings;" partial washings, as of the hands, the feet, &c., and total washings, or immersions, of their whole bodies; see Exod. xxx. 17-21; xl. 30-32; Levit. xiv. 8; xvii. 15, 16; and referred to by the apostle Paul, Heb. ix. 10. But you will observe, these washings were not complete ritual ordinances, but mere *subordinate ceremonies* prescribed for the priests as they every day, or often in the day, entered the tabernacle; and for persons who had contracted legal defilement. It is, therefore, not from these "divers washings" of the law, that the more learned advocates for the principle I am opposing, pretend that John borrowed his baptism; but from what is called JEWISH PROSELYTE BAPTISM; that is, the baptism of persons not of the seed of Abraham, but who became proselytes to the Jews' religion, and desired to be incorporated with that body: and which they received once and no more, at the time of their admission. Thus:—

DR. WALL. "This solemn baptizing of proselytes differed from the rest of their divers baptisms (which St. Paul, Heb. ix. 10., says were customary among the Jews) in this, that those others were—many times

repeated; but this was never given but once to one person."—*Hist. of Inf. Bapt.* Introd. p. 73.

JOS. JOHN GURNEY. "These points of resemblance between the proselyte baptism and the baptism of Christians are so important and so striking, as to render it nearly indisputable that the one baptism was borrowed from the other."—*Observations*, as before, p. 73.

Now, in reply to this doctrine, that John borrowed his baptism from the baptism of Jewish proselytes, I beg at once to state, that there is no proof that any such practice as the baptism of Jewish proselytes was in existence until after John and our Redeemer and the apostles had quitted this world. It is certain that the baptism of proselytes was not commanded of God, as the Divine law does not enjoin it. It is nowhere referred to in the Old Testament, nor in the Apocrypha; nor in the writings of Philo Judæus, or of Josephus; (who were Jewish writers of the same century with the apostles, the latter of whom described particularly the admission of proselytes): nor is there any allusion to this practice in the New Testament, or in the writings of the early Christian fathers before the third century after Christ.

The first pretended written references to this proselyte baptism is in the Jewish TALMUDS. The Talmuds (of which there are two, the Jerusalem and the Babylonish) are composed of what are called the MISHNA and GEMARA; the former being a compilation of the Jewish TRADITIONS, or what they call 'Oral Laws;' the latter a COMMENTARY upon the former.

The *Mishna* was not written, the Jews themselves confess, till about 100 years after the destruction of Jerusalem, *i. e.* not till about the close of the second or the beginning of the third century after Christ.

"Buxtorf says the *Jerusalem Talmud* was compiled by Rab. Jochanan 230 years after Christ; but the *Gemara*, which is by far the greatest part of the *Babylonish Talmud*, was not made till 500 years after Christ."*

Now it is admitted that these Talmuds describe the manner of admitting proselytes, by *circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice* (and this baptism is said to be by "immersion in waters,") yet not the slightest reference is made in these writings, to any proof or evidence of the existence of the practice previous to the destruction of Jerusalem; consequently no proof that it existed in John's time, and it is on the authority of these writings alone (whether called Traditions or Talmuds, and which are full of fables and folly), that the Jews practised this ceremony subsequently to the establishment of Christianity. See the Authors below, and more competent could not be produced.†

* In Dr. Gale's *Reflections on Dr. Wall's History of Infant Baptism*, p. 326.—If the Reader wishes more fully to examine this point, I refer him to this work of Dr. Gale's, and especially to a *Dissertation* upon this subject by Dr. Gill, subjoined to his *Body of Practical Divinity*. Dr. Gill affirms that the *Mishna* does not contain a word on the subject; and that the passage, quoted by Dr. Wall, does not relate to it. "In rabbinical learning Dr. Gill has no equal."—*Horne's Introduction*.

† Mr. T. BRADBURY. "I know it is said, that the Jews had a method of baptizing among them, and that our Saviour only fixt it with his disciples as he found it with his countrymen;—but the Bible will not allow me to think as these men do, whatever their learning is." After reasoning on the scriptural evidences against the hypothesis, the learned Author adds, "To fetch it from the Jews, and especially from those traditional services that obtained in their church, is a wild imagination. and no better than seeking the living among the dead."—*In Booth's Pædobap. Exam.* Vol. II. ch. iv. § 1.

DEYLINGIUS. "The baptism of proselytes, in our opinion, seems to have been received by the Jews *after* the time of John the Baptist.—Certainly it cannot be proved by any substantial testimony that it was in use among the Jews *before* the time of John. There is also a great difference between the baptism of John and that of proselytes, as the latter is described in the monuments of

But supposing for argument's sake the Jews had such a practice, as it confessedly was founded on their Traditions, unauthorized of God, I ask, Is it

the ancient Hebrews. The Jewish baptism was a rite of human institution; but John the Baptist introduced his by the command of God."—*Ibid.*

DR. JENNINGS. (Author of the *Dissertations on the Jewish Antiquities*.) "It is a further supposition of Godwin's, that our Saviour converted this Jewish Proselyte baptism into a Christian sacrament. Upon this Dr. Wall founded an argument for baptizing children as well as adult persons. . . . But, after all, it remains to be proved, not only that Christian baptism was instituted in the room of Proselyte baptism, but that the Jews had any such baptism in our Saviour's time. The earliest accounts we have of it are in the Mishna and Gemara; the former compiled, as the Jews assert, by Rabbi Juda in the second century, though learned men in general bring it several centuries lower. There is not a word of it in Philo; nor yet in Josephus, though he gives an account of the proselyting of the Idumeans. . . . and notwithstanding he speaks of John's baptism, yet it is under a very different notion from the Proselyte Baptism spoken of by the Mishnical Rabbies."—*Ibid.*

DR. OWEN. "There is no reason however that we should believe them [the Rabbies] contrary to the express testimony of Scripture. . . . The institution of the rite of baptism is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament: nor was it ever used in the admission of Proselytes while the Jewish church continued. No mention of it occurs in Philo, in Josephus, in Jesus the son of Syrach, nor in the Evangelical History. The Rabbinical opinion, therefore, owes its rise to the *Tannæ*, or Ante-Mishnical doctors, after the destruction of the city.—The opinion of some learned men, therefore, about transferring a Jewish baptismal rite (which in reality did not then exist), by our Lord Jesus for the use of his disciples is DESTITUTE OF ALL PROBABILITY."—*Ib.*

DR. RYLAND. "I cannot but consider this as an unworthy origin of a New Testament rite; and should expect that a regard for the honor of Christ would lead Christians to think it far more likely that the Jews took up their proselyte baptism in imitation of the Christians, than that John and his beloved Master adopted a mere human invention. Well may several learned Pedobaptists reject this idea which Dr. Gill has very COMPLETELY REFUTED, by showing that no such practice is referred to in the Jewish writings earlier than the THIRD CENTURY."— *Candid Statement*, &c. p. 5.

DR. LARDNER. (Author of that celebrated work, *The Credibility of the Gospel History*, &c., in 10 Volumes.) "As for the baptism of Jewish proselytes, I take it for a mere fiction of the Rabbins, by whom we have suffered ourselves to be imposed upon." *Letters to and from Dr. Doddridge*.—Let. 89, p. 275.

likely that HE who so sharply condemned the Jews for "making the word of God of none effect through their Tradition," (Mark vii. 13,) would found one of his two ritual ordinances for the New Testament Church, upon such a guilty encroachment of God's prerogative? Would HE who branded the Jewish teachers of his day as the vilest "hypocrites, and whited sepulchres," and who charged upon them as one of their greatest faults, that they rigidly observed their unauthorised customs, and "condemned the innocent" disciples, for not conforming to their customs; and especially to their *washings* which are called *baptisms*, and which were urged not on the authority of God's law, but that they might "hold the tradition of the elders," (Mark vii. 2-13)—would HE, I ask, so far honor and sanction one of these unauthorized washings as *to submit to it*,—submit to it openly before a multitude of persons, and that too very nearly at the same time that he condemned it in the strongest and severest terms? I venture to answer, THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE. He could not say "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," when referring to a human invention,—an invasion of the throne of his Father, (who forbade the slightest addition to his law; Deut. iv. 2.) and hence His baptism must have another origin, supposing the Jews had such a rite, founded on such authority.

But I now proceed to produce evidences to prove the contrary of the hypothesis referred to, and to show that John's Baptism was a Divine Institution enjoined of God upon John, and that he observed it purely as such. To be satisfied upon this my readers should remark:—

1. When John introduced his ministry and baptism, the Jews sent a deputation of Pharisees to him, to inquire into the nature and authority of his

mission. They began by inquiring, If he was the Christ? which he denied: then, If he was Elias? (*i. e.* as they meant and expected, Elijah personally risen from the dead) this he also denied: then, If he was that prophet? (predicted by Moses, Deut. xviii. 15.) this he also denied. Then followed a question in point, "Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" John i. 19-25.

Upon this circumstance I am warranted to conclude, (1.) That if baptism was so common a thing among the Jews as is pretended, and which any of the Jewish priests might administer,—John being a priest by birth, and not only so but "*counted by all men to be a prophet indeed,*" this question, *why he baptized*, never would have been put to him. (2.) That this inquiry intimates that to introduce this rite, required Divine authority, such as was expected to attend the Christ, or Elias, or that prophet. And (3.) That if John was neither of these, they inferred he had no sufficient authority to introduce this rite; for a Divinely commissioned person alone could have such authority. Then, still more decisive,—

2. John's reply to the Jews, and his address on the day following, containing an answer to this important inquiry. He tells them from whom he derived his authority to baptize, and in whom the ordinance originated:—"After me cometh a man who is preferred before me:—that he should be manifested to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." Now let the reader carefully reflect upon the next words, "And I knew him not: but HE THAT SENT ME TO BAPTIZE WITH WATER, THE SAME SAID UNTO ME," &c. John i. 26-33.

John in these few words unequivocally teaches

these *three* things. (1.) That God “sent” him, (2.) that God enjoined upon him this *particular work*, “to baptize with water,”—and (3.) that the communication he received from heaven was *immediate, clear, and direct*, “the same said unto me.” Who, after observing this inspired testimony, would entertain the notion that John had “borrowed” his practice from an unauthorized Jewish superstition! To a candid inquirer after truth, this passage alone is sufficient to settle the question, for it contains John’s own testimony upon the subject.

MATT. HENRY. “He did not run without sending; God *sent him to baptize*. He had a warrant from heaven for what he did.”—*Expos.* on the place.

DR. ADAM CLARKE. “*He that sent me—said unto me*] From this we may clearly perceive that John had a most intimate acquaintance with the Divine Being; and received not only his call and mission at first, but every subsequent direction, by immediate, unequivocal inspiration.”—*Comment.* upon the place.

3. If any doubt yet remained, I adduce the plainly implied testimony of Christ.—In order to convict the Jews of their guilt in disregarding John’s ministry, and the testimony he had borne to him as the Messiah, our Lord put the following question to them, “And Jesus “said unto them, I will also ask you one question—“The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.” See Mark xi. 29-33.

Now, had baptism been a common rite of the Jews, introduced by the Rabbies, how easy and ready would have been an answer to that effect? and the design of convicting them, would of course have failed; but knowing that it had no such origin,—that it was commonly admitted to be from heaven; but that if they gave this as their answer, our

Redeemer would have rejoined the appalling and self-convicting inquiry, "Why then did ye not believe him?" they resolved to escape from the dilemma and the charge, by replying, "We cannot tell."—This reference of Christ to the baptism of John, is equivalent to a positive assertion; as if the Redeemer had said "John's baptism was an appointment of the God of heaven; and hence the guilt of those persons who disregarded the testimony of that messenger of God, as you have done."

4. But there is yet another passage to our purpose.

Our Redeemer having borne his testimony to John as 'much more than a prophet,' and never exceeded by any born into our world, it is added,— "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John; but the Pharisees and the Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Luke vii 29, 30.

On this I only add, if declining to receive the baptism of John was 'rejecting the counsel of God,' then it must follow, John's baptism was 'the counsel of God;' an ordinance, not of human invention, but of God's wise and gracious appointment; and hence it is here intimated (as implied in the last passage) that it was daring and guilty rebellion, on the part of them to whom he was sent, to reject or neglect this ordinance of God's appointment, and the ministry associated with it.

Deeming the above quite sufficient to refute the opinion, that John's ministry belonged to the 'shadowy dispensation,' and that he 'borrowed' his rite of baptism from a Jewish rite then existing;—and sufficient also to prove that John was a preacher

of the gospel, and his baptism of God's appointment; I proceed to adduce reasons for the PERPETUITY OF BAPTISM as a Christian ordinance: but this I shall continue in my next Letter.

LETTER III.

THE PERPETUITY OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,—ARGUED FROM THE EXAMPLE, PRACTICE, AND COMMAND OF CHRIST.

MY DEAR FRIENDS :

If I have succeeded in convincing you by my last, that the ministry of John the Baptist was the gospel of Christ, and his baptism an ordinance of God's appointment, yet you may not be satisfied to infer from these premises that the rite of baptism is to be PERPETUATED IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. On this subject I must now request your attention.—I infer that such was the Divine mind, and such the intention of Christ, for the following reasons:

1. I infer the perpetuity of the rite of baptism from the BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

The period of our Saviour's baptism was when he "began to be about thirty years of age;"* and at the time when he entered upon his public ministry. His circumcision and the offering of sacrifice for him, according to the law of Moses, took place in his infancy.† He was born "under the law," and came into the world "to fulfil it."‡ Baptism was not a rite of the law of Moses, as I have shown; nor a rite to which he was brought by his parents, as expressed in the above case, "according

* Luke iii. 23. † Luke ii. 22. ‡ Gal. iv. 4; Matt. v. 17.

to that which is written in the law of the Lord ;” * but it was his VOLUNTARY ACT when he came to manhood, and connected with his public life and ministry ; which, I scarcely need say, was the establishment of “ the kingdom of heaven,” or gospel dispensation.

Christ’s submission to baptism as administered by John, was a tacit declaration of the DIVINE ORIGIN of that rite, as noted before ; and then if John’s ministry and baptism pertained to the gospel and not to the law, (which also has been proved), this act of the Saviour’s submission to this rite, so connected with his public life and preaching, affords a good evidence of his purpose to continue this ordinance, as a Christian ordinance, in his church.

When John felt a difficulty in administering the rite to his Saviour, and yet the Lord *required it*, it shows his fixed purpose to sanction it as a part of the Divine will, and of that practical righteousness which it became him as Head of his people, and them as the servants of God, to render to Divine appointments. This he openly expressed in the memorable words “ suffer it to be so now ; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” † *q. d.* ‘ Suffer me, without further delay, thus to conform to my Father’s will,—thus to sanction, as I enter upon my public ministry and work, what my Father enjoined for them who shall believe in me, and be introduced into the kingdom of heaven,—and thus by my example to render this rite the more binding and the more endeared to all my followers.’

2. Christ practised (by his disciples) the rite of baptism upon those who received his ministry, from which I also infer the perpetuity of the rite.

“ After these things came Jesus and his disciples

* Luke ii. 24.

† Mat. iii. 15.

into the land of Judea ; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

“ When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judea and departed again into Galilee.” John iii. 22, and iv. 1-3.

On these passages I propose to my Friends the following question :—

If the rite of water-baptism belong to ‘the shadowy dispensation,’ how came He who is “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,”* to require them that believed in him to receive this rite? It is unquestionable that he did require it,—that he required it, not of his hearers promiscuously, but of them whom he “made his disciples,” and who were made his disciples *before* they were baptized. So it is evident from these passages, that it was not the solitary case of one, or a few individuals, but of his disciples generally; for it was said that “Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.” It included, we should reasonably infer, ALL who received his ministry, and who had not been baptized by John. No one would imagine that our Lord treated his disciples differently; that he required some to be baptized, and others not to be baptized. His terms and mode of discipleship, were *the same* in all cases. The reader may consult the passages below.†

Then I infer, as Christ required all persons whom he made his disciples to be baptized during his ministry,—and his ministry being not of the law, but, in the words of the Scriptures, “a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, established upon better pro-

* Rom. x. 4. † Mat. xx. 25-28; xxiii. 8-12; Luke xiv. 27.

mises.”* So it will follow, Baptism is a Christian ordinance, a part of the will of Christ, and binding upon all his disciples.

3. I infer the perpetuity of the rite of baptism, from the express great command of Christ upon the subject, after his resurrection,—given, in what is called, ‘the Commission.’

When our great Redeemer had “finished” his work and sufferings on the cross,—and when on the third day he had risen from the dead and appeared to his disciples, he appointed a general meeting upon a mountain of Galilee, when he would give them his last instruction, his commission regarding their future work, and then ascend up to his Father and their Father.—The time is now come: Jesus and his disciples are upon the appointed spot, and the record of his solemn charge is thus given:—

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”—Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Matt. xxviii. 18-20; Mark xvi. 15, 16.

This very weighty and solemn charge of our risen Lord, you, my Friends, do as readily admit, and deem as irresistible and binding, as any other body of Christians. But in order to free yourselves from the obligation to observe the rite of baptism, which these passgaes so solemnly enjoin, you have given a different interpretation to the words of Christ,

* Heb. viii. 6.

from any other body of Christians; namely, that it is not 'water-baptism,' that is intended, but the 'baptism of the Holy Ghost,' or, according to others, 'a baptism with the living ministry.' Thus

ELLIS PUGH. "But I would think that inasmuch as there is no mention of water [in this commission of Christ] we have room to examine what one did Christ command? Was it his own baptism, which was the baptism of the Holy Ghost; or was it the baptism of John which was water-baptism?" He goes on to argue for the former. See his Tract *On Baptism*, p. 6.

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY, in a public address which the writer of these Letters recently heard, after repeating the above commission of Christ as the theme of his discourse, remarked, that he understood our Saviour as "not alluding to any ceremony," but that the baptizing here intended, was "a baptizing with the living ministry." So

ELISHA BATES. "They [the apostles] are to tarry till they are endued with power from on high. Then, and not till then, are they clothed with a "baptizing ministry."—*The Doctrine of Friends*, p. 223.

1. In reply to the *first* of these notions, it will be sufficient to say, that our Lord could not intend the baptism of the Holy Ghost, because in that case he would require his disciples to perform AN IMPOSSIBILITY. God only has the Spirit to give: God alone can give it; and it never was put into the power of the highest order of created beings in heaven or earth to bestow the Divine Spirit upon their fellow beings. Simon Magus thought that this was possible and wished to have this power; but the thought and desire of his heart were treated by the apostles as blasphemy.* The Holy Spirit is always said to be the gift of God, and though it was bestowed, in some instances, at the time when

* Acts viii. 18-24.

the Apostles *laid on their hands*, yet the scriptures guardedly assure us that it was not the apostles but God, in the person of the Father or Son, that bestowed the Divine communication. "I will pour out of my Spirit," saith God. "He has shed forth this," &c. See the passages below.*

And further, that this cannot be the baptizing intended in this commission of Christ is evident, because that sense, if expressed, would be "baptizing them with the Holy Ghost—in the name of the Holy Ghost;" which is absurd.

2. That the *second* sense, "baptizing them with the living ministry," cannot be the meaning of the Saviour will appear if we translate the word *baptize*, and try to read it with a translation. The reader is aware that the word is a Greek word, untranslated from the Greek Testament, conveying no sense to an English ear; but as it was a common word in the Greek language, and conveyed a plain idea of a particular action, so that idea must harmonize with the sense of the passage in which it occurs. The meaning of the word *baptize* is to *dip* or *immerse*: this is admitted on all hands, and by none more readily than by learned men in the Society of Friends, as I shall show in a future Letter. Some writers, however, who practice the mode of *sprinkling* in this ordinance, contend that the word will admit of that sense. Let us take either of these senses, or both of them, and try how the Commission will read when the word is translated, according to Mr. Gurney's interpretation of the Saviour's meaning.

"Go ye therefore and teach (or disciple) all nations *dipping* them with the living ministry in the name of the Father, &c. Or *sprinkling* them with the living ministry," &c.—"Go ye into all the

* Acts, ii. 16, 17, 18, 33; x. 44; John xiv. 16, 17, 26; xvi. 7-13.

world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is *dipped* in the living ministry—or *sprinkled* with the living ministry, shall be saved.”

I ask my readers, Can this be the meaning of Christ? The absurdity is so palpable that I need not add another word to refute it. And though in a public assembly the sound of the words, “baptizing them with the living ministry,” might not appear to be so absurd, yet *translate* the word and give it its real sense,—*the sense as it would be perceived by them to whom the Lord addressed himself*, and such a construction could not be admitted for a moment.

But to ascertain our Lord's intention, with regard to this word, it is natural to ask these Three Questions;—1. How were the disciples *likely to understand* their Saviour from the sense in which the word had been usually employed by him previous to this time?

He had used it in a three-fold sense; *first*, referring to the baptism of water; *second*, referring to the baptism of his sufferings; *third*, referring to the baptism of the Holy Ghost. In the *last* of these we do not read of his using it but *once*, “ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”* In the *second* sense he employed it on *two* occasions, to which I refer below;† but with regard to the *first* sense, if all who received his ministry were baptized, which may satisfactorily be gathered from the testimony of his apostle which we have just read, namely, “that he made and baptized more disciples than John;” and that this was done, not by himself but by his disciples, in his name and by his orders; then the conclusion cannot be denied, that he used the word as often as he enjoined upon them the observance of this rite; and that, we may infer was as often as persons by his

* Acts i. 5. † Matt. xx. 22, 23; and Luke xii. 50.

ministry were made his disciples. This therefore must be the most usual sense in which Christ employed the term. Then—

2. If, whenever the Saviour commanded his disciples to baptize previous to this period, he meant water-baptism, were they not likely to understand their Lord in the same sense now as on all former occasions? It is certain he had never commanded his disciples to baptize but with water-baptism, before this period; no other baptism to them was possible: the Spirit was not yet given; but *this* he *had* commanded, and in this sense, and in this only, they were likely to understand their Master at this time. But now—most of all decisive—we have the evidence of fact:—

3. In what sense DID the Apostles ACTUALLY UNDERSTAND their Lord with regard to this command? That they *did* understand him no one doubts; and if we were to imagine it possible that they did not understand what he meant by the term, yet such a misunderstanding could not exist after the gift of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost; and hence in their obedience to his command we have a CERTAIN INTERPRETATION of his will. Here then abundant evidence is before us in the New Testament. We have not a single passage in the history of the apostles' labors, from which it may be certainly inferred that any one person, converted by their ministry, was received into the number of the primitive churches, without receiving this rite; but in numerous cases, and on thousands of persons, we read of its solemn administration.

Before I refer to instances, I may be permitted to remark, that Friends allow that water-baptism was continued after the resurrection of Christ; but to destroy the argument from hence for the *perpetuity* of the rite, they add that it was continued “in con-

descension to the weakness of the human mind, which cannot bear sudden transitions ;” and “ that the apostles themselves were more or less under the influence of their education ;” that baptism “ only remained for the strong attachment which had been formed to it,” and to wear this away “ required time, during which, in condescension, it was borne with.” To this it is added, that Peter on the baptism of Cornelius and his friends, “ *queried* ;” and “ spoke *hesitatingly*, and not as he did when preaching the doctrines of the gospel.” In E. BATES’ *Doctrine of Friends*, pp. 212, 215, 216.

Let my readers remember this apology for the Apostles’ baptizing, and for Peter’s conduct when he “ *queried*,” and “ spoke *hesitatingly*,” while they view the following instances of the administration of this ordinance, and hear the Apostles upon the subject.

(1.) On the day of Pentecost when the Apostles received the promised gift, and “ were all filled with the Holy Ghost,” and when under Peter’s first sermon 3000 persons were converted to God, we find this apostle thus addressing his inquiring hearers, “ Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.... Then they that gladly received the word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.” Acts ii. 4, 38, 41.

No one denies that “ baptized ” here refers to water baptism, and that it is separate and distinguished from ‘ the gift of the Holy Ghost.’ And I appeal to my readers, whether Peter speaks here ‘ *hesitatingly*’ with regard to the ordinance, and, whether he does not seem to be obeying his Master, “ Go, disciple me all nations, baptizing them ?” &c.

Let no one imagine that, instructed of Christ as he had been, and "filled with the Holy Ghost," he did not know the mind of Christ, or the nature of the gospel dispensation as well as modern Christians.

(2.) When Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them, and the saving power of the gospel was extensively experienced, then, "when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Acts viii. 5-12.

No hesitancy is here felt by Philip. His Saviour had said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" the people of Samaria *believed*, and "when they believed" the ordinance immediately follows; and no allusion is made to any other baptism as intended by the Lord in the commission.

(3.) The baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch, after he had been instructed by the same individual, comes next in the inspired history. As Philip and the Eunuch proceeded in the chariot, it is said, "They came to a certain water: and the Eunuch said, See, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him." Acts viii. 35. 39.

Here again no reference is made to any baptism but that of water; and the necessity of attending to this rite, in order to obey the command of Christ, must evidently have been impressed upon the mind of the Eunuch by his inspired instructor, or he never could have put the inquiry above, upon

coming to a suitable place. This then is the way that Philip understood his Lord, and the approbation of the Holy Spirit with regard to his conduct is evident, as it was the Divine Spirit himself that directed the whole circumstance. For this see ver. 29, 39.

(4.) The baptism of Paul, which comes next, discovers anything rather than *hesitancy* either on the part of Ananias or himself. "The Lord Jesus, (said Ananias to this illustrious convert) has sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost." "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized." Acts ix. 17, 18: with xxii. 16.

Does the attention here paid to this ordinance, said to be expressly under the direction of Jesus Christ, evince anything resembling the opinion of Friends? Does the language "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized," evince hesitancy? Or does the promised gift of being "filled with the Holy Spirit" supercede the necessity of attending to this rite? No, not for an hour; for "forthwith" the whole instructions of Ananias are fulfilled, and Paul is baptized. The baptism of the Holy Ghost was evidently given him from above at the same time. Christ's commands are obeyed, and his promises fulfilled; both without delay.

(5.) The baptism of the first Gentiles received into the Christian community, comes next before us. "While Peter spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.... Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy

Ghost, as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Acts x. 44-48.

Now, I ask, my respected Friends, Where is "the influence of education" in these *Gentiles*? Were they, too, under "strong attachment" to the rites of the Jews? Surely they were as free from these failings as any can be in modern times; and yet Peter, sent as he was on this occasion, by his Lord appearing to him in a vision, and directing him how to act,—as soon as he was satisfied that these *Gentiles* were proper subjects for the ordinance, as believers,—(of which he could not doubt when they evinced the gifts of the Holy Ghost)—delayed not to require their baptism. "He commanded them to be baptized." And if this baptism is 'a weakness of the human mind,' it is not in the *Gentiles*, but in the inspired messenger of Christ, and he is to be the means of introducing that 'weakness' into the *Gentile* world! Who can admit this? Surely none. It is fair to conclude from this case, that the Apostle understood his Lord, in the commission, as enjoining the baptism of all that believed, whether Jews or *Gentiles*.*

* But the *query* and *hesitancy* attributed to Peter are in these words, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized?" If this be a *query* and a *hesitancy*, how came the Apostle in the same instant that he uttered the words, to command the baptism? Should he not have waited to observe whether any one present could answer the query? And if any one present was more capable of deciding upon this than himself, how can we account for divine wisdom selecting so incompetent a person for this most interesting and solemn service? No, my Friends, this was no query, no hesitation. It was an appeal to all present who knew the gospel and mind of Jesus, by which the Apostle justified the command to baptize, which in the next moment he delivered. *q. d.* "Can any man, knowing the mind of Christ, object to the baptism of water with regard to persons to whom God hath given the baptism of the Holy Ghost? Where God goes before us in the saving gifts of his Spirit, we cannot be wrong in following after with gospel ordinances. God hath made

(6.) The next instance of baptizing is in the case of Lydia and her household; of her it is said, "Whose heart the Lord opened that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized and her household, she besought us saying, If ye have judged me faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there." Acts xvi. 14, 15.

If the apostle Peter had an attachment for Jewish rites, and knew not whether baptism was to be continued or not; had not his 'beloved brother Paul,' after being eighteen years 'called to be an apostle' by Christ himself, and who "neither received" his knowledge of the gospel system "of man, neither was taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," and who "was caught up to the third heaven,"—had not *he* yet come to a decision,—not yet seen that this shadow is to be discontinued, now the substance is come? No,—he had not yet seen this! This first convert in Europe, Lydia at Philippi (where the kingdom of God first entered our quarter of the globe), must be baptized as soon as she received the preaching of Paul; and those of her house in the same circumstances. If Paul *was right* in his conduct in this case, the baptism of this first European convert is a Divinely authorized pattern for the imitation of Christian Europe to the end of time.

(7.) The baptism of the Philippian Jailer immediately follows Lydia's. Paul and Silas are his instructors. The Jailer addressed himself to them under Divine impressions, "Sirs, what must I do to

no difference between these Gentiles and us in the greatest of all gifts, can we make a difference in ritual institutions?" Impossible: and hence their baptism followed. I appeal to the Society of Friends themselves. Whether this is not a more rational construction of the Apostle's meaning, than to suppose that he proposed a *query* and *spoke hesitatingly* on such an occasion.

be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized; he and all his straightway. And...he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house." Acts xvi. 30, 34.

Is there in this case any apparent want of decision? any *query*, or *hesitancy* regarding baptism? Christ's declaration was "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." The Jailer and his house *believed*, were *baptized straightway*, and were assured that their *faith* secured their salvation. Baptism is put in its proper place: it is an act of obedience to Christ, but not a saving ordinance; and as such act of obedience it is rendered to the Lord "straightway."

How absurd must the thought be that this prompt obedience of the Philippian Jailer and his house, arose from their attachment to Jewish rites; and that Paul baptized them "in condescension to the weakness of the human mind, which cannot bear sudden transitions!" Was there no *sudden transition* in the Jailer's case?

(8.) Paul, in a few months after quitting Philippi, is at Corinth; and having here introduced with happy success the gospel of the kingdom: "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house: and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." Acts xviii. 8.

The Corinthians generally were far enough away from any leaning to the religion of the Old Testament, whatever might be the peculiar case of Crispus. They were proverbially wicked; and some of the baptized had been amongst the vilest, (1

Cor. vi. 10, 11.) If then their baptism was consequently upon Jewish weakness it must be attributed to the Apostle who directed their baptism, and not to his converts; but who that knows the life and character of Paul, could admit such a charge against him?

(9.) The last instance of baptizing, mentioned in the Acts, is in the case of twelve men at Ephesus. The question, Whether these men were baptized twice, first by John and now by Paul or by John only, does not affect our present inquiry. They are said to be "certain disciples—who had not heard whether there be any Holy Ghost—yet were baptized unto John's baptism,—and in the name of the Lord Jesus:—and when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." Acts xix. 1-7.

A period of nearly thirty years had elapsed since their baptism by John (if he himself baptized them); but no one had ever taught them concerning the baptism of the Holy Ghost: so far from that, they knew nothing about the Divine gift; and therefore could not know that the external ordinance they had received, referred to him, and was to be discontinued when his influences were enjoyed. Nor does the apostle now tell them so, when, on laying on his hands, the heavenly gift is conferred upon them.

I have now recited all the instances of the administration of the rite of baptism, which I find in the history of the apostle's labors as recorded in the Acts; and there are none afterwards mentioned in the Apostolical Epistles, unless we except Paul's reference to his baptizing at Corinth as including other persons beside those mentioned in the 8th

instance, where he says he “baptized Crispus and Gaius, also the household of Stephanas.” 1 Cor. i. 14-16.

These instances extend over a period of between 20 and 30 years from the time the apostles received the commission of their Lord, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; and in this obedience of the Apostles to their Lord’s command, I conceive we have the *best illustration* that could be given of *the sense* in which the Apostles understood their Lord, *and continued* to understand him to the end of their life and labors.

In closing this Letter, then, I may remark, in general terms, That as it is undeniable that the Commission of Christ contained the command to the Apostles *to baptize*, so in their after life we expect to find *some* attention paid and obedience rendered to this part of the Commission; nor are we disappointed. This obedience we have now fully read: they did baptize, and also required others to administer the rite; and my readers are requested especially to observe that the sacred records describe them as baptizing *ONLY IN ONE WAY*; that is by water baptism.—We never read of their *baptizing by the ministry*; and the baptism of the Holy Ghost was not *their* work, but God’s; and hence we find, they *prayed* for it, and were sometimes “astonished” when it was conferred. Acts x. 44, 45. So J. J. GURNEY judiciously remarks, in distinguishing the baptism of water from that of the Holy Ghost, “The one is the work of man: the other is *Divine*, the work of the eternal Son of God.” *Observ.* p. 88.

I am, therefore, compelled to come to this conclusion, that either Christ *intended water-baptism* in his commission—or that the apostles *misunderstood him*. The latter I cannot admit, because, (1.) Their Lord would not suffer them thus to continue

in error. (2.) He richly shed upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost, whose office was to 'lead them into all truth.' (3.) The *special direction* of the Spirit, and of Christ, attended baptizing occasions; as in the cases of the Eunuch and Paul.—I am, therefore, constrained to believe the former, That Christ *intended water-baptism* in his commission. If so, who will reply against God? against the Judge of all the earth? "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

The *spiritual design* of the ordinance will be the subject of my next Letter.

LETTER IV.

THE SPIRITUAL IMPORT AND INTENTION OF BAPTISM, AN ARGUMENT FOR ITS PERPETUITY.

MY DEAR FRIENDS :

You need not be told that all the ceremonial and ritual institution of the Bible were intended by Divine Wisdom to teach spiritual things. The ordinances of the Mosaic law had a powerful bearing upon great and solemn truths, especially upon man's guilty state, and the work of the Lord Jesus in effecting his salvation. They assisted, by the aid of the senses, the thoughts and affections of the heart.

The two rites of the New Testament are especially instructive. They are not to be looked at as mere ceremonies. In that case the Divine intention in them is lost.—The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the death of Christ. "This do (said our dying Lord,) in remembrance of me;" and Paul

adds, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye show the Lord's death till he come." Luke xxi. and 1 Cor. xi. 26. Here is its spiritual intention and import; and whether the object is important or not, my readers will judge.

What then is the spiritual design of baptism? We are only safe in answering this question by 'searching the scriptures.' Here I find also, that Divine Wisdom intended important truths to be conveyed to the mind by the use of this rite.

1. Baptism in water was intended to teach the *sinfulness of man*, and the necessity of *purification* from sin, and of *spiritual regeneration* by the Holy Ghost, in order to eternal life. See Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16; Tit. iii. 5.

2. Baptism presents a figure of the *flood* through which our Lord had to pass, to work out our salvation. Of this he speaks in most affecting language, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" And in David, his type, "I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." Luke xii. 50; Ps. lxix. 2.

3. Baptism also is a figure of a *burial* to a life of sin and a *resurrection* to a life of piety. See Rom. vi. 4; Col ii. 12.

4. Baptism was intended as an initiatory ordinance into the visible church,—and hence implies a coming 'out of the world,' and a 'putting on of Christ,' as our only spiritual Lord and Master. Gal. iii. 27.

Without adverting to other allusions, I must ask my readers, Whether there is anything in these designs which is *peculiar to the time* when our Lord and his disciples were on earth? Whether they are not of precisely the same importance *now* as they were then?

Is it not of importance *for me* to be reminded of the pollution of sin, and of the 'fountain opened' for my purification in the blood of the Lamb, as well as the primitive Christians? Should I be less mindful of my Redeemer's baptism of sufferings than they? Is it not equally required of me to quit a life of sin, as a *buried* person quits the world, and to consider myself *raised up* by the grace of God to live to my Saviour in newness of life, as of believers in the first age? And, is it not equally important that I should give myself to the Lord and then to his people,—put on my Redeemer as my future Lord and Master, and that as openly and avowedly as did his first disciples?

If the answer to these questions be, That the obligation is equal—the importance the same—and the utility as great: then I may reasonably infer, that Divine wisdom, in appointing this rite for the first age of the Christian church, intended it to be *continued* and *perpetuated* coeval with that church upon earth.

LETTER V.

THE ARGUMENTS OF FRIENDS AGAINST THE PERPETUITY OF WATER-BAPTISM CONSIDERED.

MY DEAR FRIENDS:

The limits I have prescribed to myself in this little work, will not allow of a reply to all that Friends have written upon this subject. The leading and decisive arguments are not many, and these I shall notice.

1. It is said that the baptism of John is quite distinct from the baptism of Christ,—the former with *water*, the latter with the *Holy Ghost*;—that

the former was to 'decrease,' and only continue as a figure of the latter till the resurrection of Christ, and then to cease.

Most cheerfully is this distinction allowed. No enlightened Christian blends the two. They may both be realized in the same person, as in the case of the first disciples of Christ; but they may be the one without the other, as the baptism of water in the case of Simon Magus, without the baptism of the Spirit; and the baptism of the Spirit, when the rite of water had not preceded it, as in the case of Cornelius. Other Christians do no more confound these baptisms than Friends do, and to write so largely as some have done upon the distinction is generally so much labor lost.

But with regard to the 'decrease' of water baptism, and its entire cessation upon the resurrection of Christ, this is a gratuitous and an utterly unfounded assertion. John the Baptist declared of the Saviour, "He must increase, but I must decrease," John iii. 30; but this neither refers to the baptism of Christ, nor his own, but to their *cause*, the number of their followers, and the object of their work and mission. John's work, (which was "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord,") was soon to close, and his disciples, so "prepared," were soon to be turned over to the Saviour, and to become disciples of Christ: thus he was to decrease and Christ increase. To the latter the promise is, that 'of his increase there shall be no end.' To infer that the rite of baptism is to be done away, from the above passage, is only *begging the question*.

2. Friends are accustomed to cite several passages in the New Testament, which relate to the fulfilment of the Mosaic rites, their being disannulled by the coming of Christ, and the impropriety of their being attended to by Christians; and passages

of strong disapprobation of human inventions in the service of Christ; as Paul complained of the Colossians, ii. 20-22, "Why are ye subject to ordinances—after the commandments and doctrines of men?" In all this we agree; but Friends, most mysteriously and unjustly, join Baptism and the Lord's Supper to the list of those ancient rites and disapproved inventions.

I have already proved that water baptism, as a Divine ordinance, commenced in the ministry of John, and that John's ministry pertained to the gospel, and not to the law. The Lord's Supper was unknown till instituted by Christ, in "the same night in which he was betrayed." How, then, are these ordinances to be called, as they are by Friends, the 'relics of the preceding dispensations?' Respecting baptism, I assert confidently (and let my friends prove the contrary), that no such rite was ever enjoined under the law; that is, FOR ONE PERSON TO BAPTIZE ANOTHER IN THE NAME OF THE MOST HIGH. There is no such institution in the Jewish code.*

The "*divers washings*" or *baptisms* spoken of by Paul, as abolished and no longer to be observed, (Heb. ix. 10.) were private or personal ablutions, —*persons washing themselves*, and that on occasions

* Since preparing the foregoing Letters, I have seen a pamphlet entitled, "a Scriptural Inquiry respecting the obligation of Ritual Observances under the Christian dispensation, by William Richardson," (a respectable member of the Society of Friends,) Newcastle, 1837. This writer abandons J. J. Gurney's position, 'that John borrowed his baptism from Jewish Proselyte baptism,' and will have "the institution of water baptism," in Num. xix. 7. 8. This reminds me of the celebrated Grotius, who did not deem the date of the law ancient enough, and thinks the rite commenced immediately after the Deluge, to commemorate the purification of the world. But Mr. Dorrington is not satisfied with so recent a date as the Deluge, and will have it to be "appointed by God, in the beginning."—They have all the same authority; each his own fancy.

almost innumerable, and no act of adoration, or mention of the Divine name, appointed to attend them. But, contrast the New Testament baptism with these, and where is the identity—where indeed the likeness? and if so entirely dissimilar, how can the latter be a *continuation* of the former?

Hence again it will follow, that though the whole code of Jewish rites is abolished in Christ,—and we would rejoice, in common with Friends, “in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free,” and would tremble at the thought of being “entangled with the yoke of bondage,” under which the Jews so long labored; yet this abolition of Jewish rites, and happy freedom of the Christian from the oppressive burden, *has nothing to do with the subject under our attention*; it is entirely foreign to the point, and proves nothing on either side.

3. Friends assert that Jesus Christ never baptized with water; that when he called his twelve apostles, and when he gave them commission, he did not baptize them, and hence water baptism, not beginning in him, cannot be *Christian baptism*.

It is allowed that “Jesus baptized not,” as the Evangelist John asserts, (ch. iv. 2.); but does not this same John tell us that “Jesus came into the land of Judea, and there he tarried and baptized?” ch. iii. 22. Does the apostle contradict himself? By no means. The Lord Jesus baptized, not by his own hands, but by his disciples: *i. e.*, they baptized by his orders; and having this Divine authority John calls it repeatedly, the *baptizing of Jesus*. So the rite has continued in the church from the *authority* of Jesus, (as I have shown in my third letter), and hence it is properly CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.*

* I have not noticed the distinction, of which much has been said by different writers, between the baptism of John and what

4. Friends seem to think they have an impregnable fortress in Paul's declaration to the Corinthians, "I thank God, that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." 1 Cor. i. 14-17. On this remarks—

MR. W. RICHARDSON. "If baptism had been a Christian ordinance, how could it have been a subject of thankfulness, that he, Paul, had administered the rite to so few?"—*Inquiry*, p. 31.

I answer by another question, If baptism was *not* a Christian ordinance, how came Paul to baptize AT ALL? If he knew that Christ sent him, and that baptism was *no part* of the work which Christ gave him to perform, but that it was contrary to his mind, how came he to baptize Lydia and the Jailer, and others of their houses, at Philippi? and the

is called Christian baptism, or baptism by command of Christ. After a careful perusal of the Scriptures upon the subject, I believe they were *substantially the same*, and differed chiefly with regard to their relation to *Christ's coming*, or having already *come* and finished his work. John baptized, requiring a profession of repentance and a belief in the *coming Saviour*, Matt. iii. 6; Acts xix. 4; the Apostles baptized, requiring a professed belief in the *Saviour as being come*. Acts viii. 37. Here it is true, *is a distinction*; but, I conceive, not such but that we may pronounce them substantially and essentially one. So some of the most able and learned Divines have maintained, as Beza. L'Enfant, Gill, and others. Thus the apostles received no other water-baptism, so far as we are informed, but that of John; no more did Apollos, Acts xviii. 25. And as to the case of the twelve at Ephesus, Acts xix. 1-7, if they were here baptized by Paul. I can only infer, with Matthew Henry, that the manner in which they had received John's baptism was essentially defective; being probably baptized by some of John's disciples who had not informed them of the Holy Ghost which the Messiah was to confer, as John had done.

JOS. J. GURNEY. "As John baptized on conversion to a faith in the Messiah *to come*, so they (the apostles) baptized on conversion to a faith that Jesus *was* the Messiah." *Observ.* p. 76.]

persons at Corinth, named by him in the place quoted? To administer this rite at all, "in the name of the Lord Jesus," as he did, is a demonstration of his belief, that the authority and approbation of Christ attended the ordinance, however few he might baptize.

Paul's *thankfulness* on account of baptizing so few at Corinth, he himself explains—because the existing disputes there produced parties, and these parties rallied under the names of Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas; and probably prided themselves upon the dignity of him that baptized them. The cause for thankfulness then naturally follows: "I thank God that so few of such disputants can avail themselves of the name of Paul; for it has so happened that I have baptized but very few of you."

But how could he add that "Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel?" If the conduct of his life illustrates his meaning, (and there can be no better illustration,) then his meaning is, "Christ sent me into a guilty world, not for the purpose of administering baptism, which cannot save the soul, but for the purpose of preaching the gospel. The latter is the great, special, and paramount work of my life, for which Christ sent me; the former is subordinate, and other disciples, not so sent of Christ and so employed, may duly discharge that part of the will of my Lord."

This was precisely the case with Peter. He was sent to Cornelius to preach Christ to him and his friends. They believed the word, and Peter "commanded" others to baptize them in the name of the Lord.

5. Friends attribute the sanction given to the ordinances by the Apostles, after the resurrection, to their strong attachment to their long accustomed forms, and *imperfect knowledge* of the abolition of

Jewish rites, and of the true spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom.

Upon this argument, I confess, I feel pain to make any reply ; because the argument is founded upon a principle which, if admitted, would shake our confidence in the entire records of the New Testament ! If the Apostles did not understand the nature of the Christian dispensation, where are we to learn it ? Where was the whole world to learn it, previous to the appearance of the *Apology* of Robert Barclay, in 1676 ? Did not Christ appoint his Apostles and disciples to "teach all things whatsoever he commanded," and promise them the all-sufficient aid of the Holy Ghost, to qualify them for this important and glorious work ? And is it not expressly said, that they were, on the day of Pentecost, "filled with the Holy Ghost ?" Acts ii. 4.

Any *attachment* to Jewish ceremonies on the part of the Apostles, after this Divine gift, I find not ; but enough to show me that they looked upon the code of Jewish rites as "a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear ;" Acts xv. 10. It is clear, and readily admitted, that many of the professed Jewish converts, especially at Jerusalem, did not equally see this, but would have believers "circumcised, and keep the law." Acts xv. 1. But did the Apostles give in to this error, and comply with their demands ? If so, why did they suffer from Jewish persecutors, for not keeping the law ? of which, surely, we have examples enough.

And with regard to that measure of conformity which the Apostles rendered, and especially Paul, in circumcising Timothy, I think it involves no *compromising*—no attachment to Jewish rites—no want of understanding the nature of pure Christianity.

The conformity to the law, rendered by the Apostles, related chiefly to ceremonies affecting their

union with the Gentiles, who were deemed by the law “unclean;” and I think it evident that the apostles viewed these ceremonies as *matters of indifference*, neither making those that attended to them *innocent* nor *guilty*; and that the object and design they had in view in this conformity, was of such magnitude as rendered it proper and desirable: namely, the spiritual benefit and eternal salvation of their brethren after the flesh. Hear the the Apostle Paul in his own defence, upon this very point:—

“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I may gain the more. And unto the Jews I became *as a Jew*, that I might gain the Jews; and to them that are under the law, *as under the law*, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak, I became as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” 1 Cor. ix. 19-22.

This lovely passage contains a most satisfactory reason for that measure of conformity in which the Apostles appeared “as Jews,” after they became Apostles of Christ. This also explains the circumstance of Timothy’s circumcision. None knew better than Paul, that “neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision.” Gal. v. 6; vi. 15. But, when going amongst the Jews, to introduce the Gospel of Jesus, and desirous of having Timothy with him, who (his father being a Greek) was not circumcised, and on that account would be shunned by the Jews, he removed this cause of offence, and circumcised him. Acts xvi. 3.

Now, I must request my readers especially to remark, that this act was not done for the purpose

of obeying the law, *as still binding*: in that case, *all* the law would be equally binding, (as the Apostle shows, Gal. v. 1-4,) and the whole must be kept. If Christians should conform to the law in *this* view of it, Christ, the end of the law, would “profit them nothing.” It was this view of the law, *as binding*, which some of the “false brethren” in the church at Jerusalem entertained, which was resisted by all the Apostles, (Acts xv.,) and by Paul in particular, in the most decisive manner. “To whom (he says) we gave place by subjection, NO, NOT FOR AN HOUR; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.” Gal. ii. 5.

This distinction between what Judaizing teachers would require as *necessary* and *binding*, and what might be innocently observed to gain access to avowed Jews and unbelievers, exhibits the whole conduct of the Apostle Paul in all he did, and preached, and wrote, in the most lovely harmony.

But what shall I say of the doctrine of Friends, respecting the partial and defective illumination of the Apostles, and their not knowing the will of Christ upon this subject? This is the point that pains me to notice. Hear a Friend upon this subject:—

MR. W. RICHARDSON. “. It could only be because he (Peter) *had not yet fully seen* to the end of that which had long been decreasing—that he seems to have concluded that water was at all necessary. . . . It is remarkable *by what slow degrees Peter overcame these prejudices*. On the day of Pentecost, when thousands had been convinced by his powerful preaching, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, ‘and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said unto them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ,’ &c. *This seems to have*

been John's baptism that Peter was recommending, being expressed in the same terms; he at that time evidently supposing that the Divine gift was to follow, not to precede, and so entirely to supersede the necessity of the administration of water. But he was taught differently upon the occasion of the conversion of Cornelius," &c.—*Scriptural Inquiry*, p. 26.

Now, to candid, impartial readers, I appeal whether this is not in effect saying, that 'The apostle Peter, though filled with the Holy Ghost, *by a mistake*, administered a Jewish rite instead of Christian baptism, and initiated the first 3000 converts to Christ into a gross error, instead of into pure gospel truth: but this, alas! arose from his being so slow in overcoming his prejudices, and not seeing the end of what John, with not half his advantages, long since saw as decreasing. Peter thought, and led his hearers to suppose, that this 'relic of former dispensations' was what Christ intended by baptism; so that he could not fully see whether he was under the law or under grace, or of what dispensation he was an Apostle!'

What expressions of regret can be deep enough, or strong enough, if we really believed this, to convey our sorrow that Peter had not been better instructed; and not Peter only, but "the rest of the Apostles," and the entire Christian body, all of whom were then present, and all in the same common error! Surely, Luke could "not fully see" the meaning of his own words, when he said of these primitive disciples, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Here is a proof positive to the contrary, when Peter gave utterance to the command, "Be baptized every one of you!" Oh! but that some one kind Friend had been present, to have said, 'Stay! stay! this is an error, and if you

commit this mistake upon these first converts, 3000 in number, where will it end? Recollect that the Church of Christ in all future ages, will 'have us for an example,' and if we set the error agoing, it will certainly run on till the end of time! The error into which you are all fallen, is in supposing the Lord meant water baptism in the commission, when he really intended 'baptizing by the Holy Ghost, or by the living ministry,' which is already realized upon these persons, and hence water-baptism is not at all necessary; nay, it would be a great error—it would be leading these people from the substance to the shadow; and millions hereafter will 'become followers of us, having us for an example,' and thus perpetuate the mistake!

I do not, however, for one moment admit the error referred to. I believe such an error, in the whole flock of Christ, so Divinely endowed as they were, was an IMPOSSIBILITY.

Then, Mr. RICHARDSON states, that Peter "was taught differently upon the occasion of the conversion of Cornelius." This is a marvellous statement, when that apostle "commanded" the baptism of Cornelius and his friends, *after* he had seen that they had been baptized with the Holy Ghost; and this circumstance, so far from showing that the Divine gift was "to *supersede* the baptism of water," demonstrated the *very contrary* as decisively as it was possible to convey that doctrine!

But frequent allusions are made to the errors of the Apostles and Evangelists, in this "Inquiry" of Mr. R. To neutralize the testimony of Luke, in giving the words of Jesus at the Supper, "This do in remembrance of me," Mr. R. adds, "BUT LUKE WAS NOT PRESENT, and wrote from the information of others." *Inquiry*, p. 8. Is *that* a sufficient reason for rejecting the language of the Evangelist? Was

Moses present when "God created the heaven and the earth," of which he only gives the account, and of the events of the first 2500 years? Was Paul present when the Saviour said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," which Paul only records? Was Luke present at the birth of Jesus, at Bethlehem, to know that he was "laid in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn?" or present with the shepherds of Judea, to hear the angels' declaration, on this blessed event, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy," &c., which none but Luke has recorded? What, my dear Friends, is the confidence we are to place in the statements of the Bible, if the objection against an inspired writer, "he was not present," could be admitted as having any weight?

Of Paul, Mr. R. remarks, that "Notwithstanding his decided disapproval of rituals, he was sometimes carried to the EXTREME OF TOLERATION, with respect to these things!" But Paul's errors in part are to be attributed to James; so that they are not entirely his own. "Even he himself (says Mr. R.) was on one occasion persuaded by James, and all the elders were present, Acts xxi. 18, to conform to the Jewish ritual, *no doubt contrary to his own better judgment*, as may be inferred from his Epistles." Referring to Acts xxi. 20-24, the same Author adds, "* * * The indulgence of Paul, to the *rooted prejudices* of others was certainly carried to the *utmost verge of propriety, if not beyond it!*" "It is true that Paul was not permitted to complete the performance of that which was attempted to be imposed upon him by the weakness of others for it was by the violence of the Jews, that he was haled from a scene that evidently tended to the degradation of his ministry."—*Inquiry*, pp. 10, 28, 99.

From this sad account of the weakness and inde-

cision of the Apostles, Mr. R. infers, "that no argument can be sustained, drawn from the example or practice only of the believers in the early times of Christianity, with respect to the observance of rituals." P. 29. Mr. R. seems to be saying to himself, "I will call the Apostles 'believers;' and from these 'believers' weakly yielding to the Jews, with respect to the abrogated rites of the Old Testament, I will *deny their authority* respecting the rites of the New Testament; and by this easy method I shall demonstrate the invalidity of all reasoning in behalf of the observance of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and thus carry my argument in triumph!"

The Apostles of Christ are here exhibited in a light which will not bear comment! I am confident in stating, that if this method of treating the authority of the Apostles were admitted, we have here the *lever* and the *fulcrum* by which we might subvert and destroy the whole system of inspired truth, given to mankind by "the Apostles of the Lamb!" How justly might an infidel rejoice in having such instruments given him, for the subversion of any of the glorious truths thus conveyed by inspiration to our world!

But I must have another word with my respected Friends, before I quit this point, and then I will leave the subject to their mature reflections. If it were an error to observe the ordinance of baptism, the error does not seem wholly to rest with the *Apostles* and *disciples*. Who sent Philip, with his views decidedly in favor of water baptism, to go and meet the Eunuch? "The Angel of the Lord!" Who said to Philip, with such views, "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot?" It was "The Spirit" of God! Who sent Ananias to Paul, when the former was a zealous advocate for the rite of baptism? "The Lord, even Jesus, that appeared

unto Paul!" Who directed Cornelius to send for Peter, to instruct him and others, with such defective and obscure views upon this subject as Peter was known to have? "An angel of God, who said, Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon. . . . HE SHALL TELL THEE WHAT THOU OUGHTEST TO DO!" So when he arrived, Cornelius addressed him, "Now we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are COMMANDED THEE OF GOD;" and at the close of this happy interview, with the Holy Ghost richly shed upon them, Peter "COMMANDED them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." See from hence, to whom *the blame* of sanctioning the observance of water baptism (if *blame* there be) is to be attributed! Not to the Apostles. It is ungenerous to attach it to them; but it reverts from them to the *Authorities* by which they were sent on those solemn occasions. This circumstance *alone* carries overwhelming conviction to my mind, and contains, in my humble opinion, an *unanswerable* reply to every argument against the observance of baptism as a Christian ordinance.

The weight and force of this, I now leave to the serious consideration of my readers and the blessing of God—humbly conceiving that I have made out the PERPETUITY, OR PERPETUAL OBLIGATION, of this sacred rite, on the basis of Divine truth.

LETTER VI.

THE PROPER SUBJECTS OF THE BAPTISMAL RITE.

MY DEAR FRIENDS :

There is no controversy among Christians, who observe the rite of baptism, respecting the propriety of administering the ordinance to persons giving a satisfactory evidence of being *believers in Christ*; for so the words of the institution run, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved:" and the practice of the Apostles, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."

But from an early period of Christian history the baptism of *infants*, upon the profession made by sureties or sponsors in their behalf, has very widely prevailed. The Scriptures contain no reference to this subject. This is readily admitted on all hands. If the readers of these Letters will turn back to the account given of the instances of baptizing, both before and after the ascension of Christ, they will find not the slightest intimation of the baptism of any not capable of making a profession of faith in Christ, as the Eunuch did; but such account is given of almost all, as will lead us to infer that the same profession was uniformly required and given in all cases. We cannot suppose the Apostles would require in one case, what they did not require in others.

The first certain account we have of bringing infants to the baptismal rite, is in a book of Tertullian, an African father, entitled *De Baptismo*, written in the beginning of the third century. He

speaks of it with disapprobation, and dissuades from it, as an invasion upon the law of Christ. So he disapproved of the office of *Sponsors*, who came forward to supply the defect of the child, and to become bound for the child's future conduct—that it shall be in harmony with the profession made in its behalf.

Between A. D. 250 and 420, the practice obtained the sanction of Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, and Augustine of Hippo, who defended it on the ground, not of scripture precept or precedent, but of the *necessity* and *importance* of the ordinance to salvation. With this supposed necessity, efficacy, and high authority, the practice obtained widely in Africa, and then in Italy, and soon over the greater part of Europe; and at Councils, held in the fifth and sixth centuries, *anathemas* were pronounced upon all who denied the necessity of this rite to salvation, and the propriety of granting it to infants. At the same time, imperial laws were issued, forbidding all *rebaptizing*, under the penalty of *death*. Thus it obtained, and thus it prevailed.

I need not enter into the consideration of the arguments which have been adduced in support of infant baptism; as the Society of Friends have never admitted them as having any weight, when the plain authority of Scripture could not be produced; and when indeed they saw that the practice was opposed to the genius of the religion of Christ, which is no farther known in our world than *personal religion* exists.

In confirmation of what I have stated, it will, therefore, be sufficient for me, on this subject, to cite the testimony of writers belonging to the society of Friends. The following I transcribe from Abraham Booth's *Pædobaptism Examined*, Vol. II. Chap. I. p. 12-14.

ROBERT BARCLAY. "As to the baptism of infants, it is a mere human tradition, for which neither precept nor practice is to be found in all the scripture."—*Apology*, Propos. xii.

SAMUEL FOTHERGILL. "I do not find in any part of the holy scripture, either precept or example for the practice of sprinkling infants,—if any such proof, or plain declaration, could be produced in support of sprinkling infants, it would have been, long ere now, produced by those who have continued the practice of that ceremony. The present advocates for it would not be reduced to the necessity of *presumptive* arguments, and *uncertain consequences*; such as the supposition that there were children in the household of Lydia, the jailer of Philippi, and Stephanas. In both commissions (Mat. xxviii. 19, 20; and Mark xvi. 15, 16.) *belief*, and *being taught*, are previous to baptism. That infants are capable of neither, is out of doubt; and if we will not subscribe to the grossest absurdities, we must allow that none can believe by proxy. The sprinkling of infants is utterly destitute of any proof of divine institution."—*Remarks on an Address*, pp. 5, 6, 12, 30.

JOSEPH PHIPPS. "The practice of sprinkling infants, under the name of baptism, hath neither precept nor precedent in the New Testament. For want of real instances, *mere suppositions* are offered in support of it."—*Dissertations on Baptism and Communion*, p. 30.

ELIZ. BATHURST. "Infant baptism, they (the Friends) utterly deny, as a thing by men imposed, and never by God or Christ instituted; neither is there any scripture precept or precedent for it. Indeed how should there be, since it was not taken up, nor innovated for above two hundred years after Christ died?—Yet we grant the baptism of those that were adult, or come to age, and had faith to entitle them to it. This was the baptism of John."—*Testimony and Writings*, pp. 44, 45. Edit. 4th.

THOMAS LAWSON. "Sprinkling of infants is a case unprecedented in the primitive church; an irreptitious custom, sprung up in the night of apostacy, after the falling away from the primitive order."—*Baptismalogia*, pp. 69, 117.

RICHARD CLARIDGE. "As for the baptism of infants, it ought not to be retained in the church, there being neither precept nor example for it in the scripture." *Life and Posthumous Works*, pp. 179.

GEORGE WHITEHEAD. "As to dipping or sprinkling infants, or young children, we find no precept or precedent in holy scripture for the practice thereof.—What great hypocrisy and insincerity are these persons justly chargeable with, in the sight of God, angels, and men, in their not practising that baptism they have pleaded for, from the practice of the Apostles? but instead thereof rhantism, or sprinkling of infants, to make them thereby members of Christ, and of his church militant, who are neither capable of teaching, nor of confession of faith."—*The Rector Exam.* p. 23. *Truth Prevalent*, pp. 125, 6.

WILLIAM PENN. There is "not one text of scripture to prove that sprinkling in the face was the water baptism, or that children were the subjects of water baptism, in the first times."—*Defence of Gospel Truths, against the Bishop of Cork*, p. 82.

The above testimonies express very decidedly the fixed sentiment of the leading writers of the Society, and I have no doubt that the body generally, if not universally, would subscribe without hesitation to these testimonies. On this therefore I need add nothing farther, but proceed to speak of the *scriptural mode* of baptism: which shall be the subject of my next and last Letter.

LETTER VII.

THE SCRIPTURAL MODE OF BAPTISM.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I cheerfully agree with you that no outward forms,—no ritual services, however, or by whomsoever administered, can *of themselves* be of any *spiritual* benefit. It is solely the province of the Spirit of God to enlighten the mind, to change the heart, and to communicate spiritual and saving gifts to the soul.

But while it is granted that there is nothing saving in ritual services, however performed, it must be admitted, at the same time, that if they are to be observed at all, they must be observed *precisely as they are appointed* by the Most High; or otherwise, if they are altered, and not as Divinely instituted, they are no longer *His* ordinances, but mere human inventions. Man has the same right to appoint new ordinances, as he has to alter what God ordains; and of the two, the latter is the most daring act of presumption.

Here I must remind my readers of the difference between *Moral Laws*, and those which are *Positive* and *Ceremonial*. ‘Moral laws,’ relate to those principles and actions, which, if there were no precepts from God to enjoin them, are seen and known by moral sense *to be right*, and the universal duty of mankind;—such as “Thou shalt not steal.” ‘Positive laws’ relate to God’s instituted worship and to such services connected with his worship *as never could be seen and known to be the duty of men, and would not be so, if God had not enjoined them*; such as Circumcision, the Passover, &c. They owe

their origin and obligation purely to God's command. Man's mind or will has nothing to do with them, but to yield to the authority of God in them.

Thus with regard to the Passover, it was not left to Moses or the Jews to determine what animal was to be selected for that ordinance; God's law pointed it out precisely; *Exod. xii. 5*;—nor how or where the blood of the Paschal Lamb was to be sprinkled; this is also prescribed, *v. 7*;—nor what kind of bread was to be used on the occasion; the law has fixed it, and subjoins an awful penalty on not conforming to the Divine appointment, *v. 8, 15*.—If *another* animal were selected—or if a proper animal; but the blood otherwise disposed of—or, both these being according to the law, yet *leavened bread* used, it would no longer be the 'Lord's Passover.' Essential parts of the service not being as God ordained, but altered or omitted by the will of man, the whole service has lost its sacred character.

So the law of baptism is a positive law. We know nothing about this rite but what God is pleased to tell us; and if we alter any essential part of it, it is no longer a Divine ordinance. Two things are essential to it as such, namely, (1.) That the person to be baptized should be a professed *Believer* in Christ. (2.) That the baptism should be an *Immersion* in water, in the name of the Most High. I have already spoken to the *first* of these, and now must request attention to the *second*. The case of the Eunuch, taken in connection with the commission, exhibits both these.

At the present period, this rite is professedly administered by different modes; but, evidently, one only can have the authority of the Divine law. Over the North and East of Europe, *immersion* is observed, as it is by the Baptist denomination generally throughout the world. In Popish countries

pouring is the authorized and general mode; but in many Protestant States *sprinkling* is almost universally practised. Now, if the divine law authorized the former of these (which I maintain it does), each of the latter is so essentially different from it, as no longer to be the rite which the Lord ordained—and is, consequently, a human invention.

The serious inquirer will now demand the evidence of the Divine law. I will give it him, and then quote the decided testimony of several writers belonging to the Body of Friends upon the subject.

1. The word *Baptize*, in the Divine law, Matt. xxviii. 19, means to *immerse*, and when used without a figure has never any other signification.* It never means to pour or sprinkle; and to *immerse* is the only plain and proper sense of the word; the selection of this term by Divine Wisdom to express the ordinance, determines the mode.

2. The *Places* at which the ordinance was administered, indicates the same. The river Jordan was the place of John's baptizing, and there the Lord Jesus, and some, if not all his disciples, received this ordinance. To go to a river, and a river at a distance, would never be done for any other mode. Ænon is mentioned as selected by John "because there was much water there," (John iii. 26,) which only is required for immersion.

3. The *peculiar Phraseology* of scripture respecting the circumstances attending baptism leads to the same conclusion. The Eunuch's baptism is a most convincing example. (1.) He and Phillip "came UNTO a certain water. (2.) They both went

* Should this little work fall into the hand of any one desirous of a deep investigation of this subject, I refer him to the elaborate and decisive work, entitled, "Baptism, in its Mode and Subjects, by Alexander Carson," a work of profound research with regard to the use of the word by Greek writers of every description. [It may be found at 118 Arch St., Philadelphia.]

down INTO the water; and (3.) When the baptism was performed, they “came up out of the water.” Acts viii. 36-39. So of Jesus Christ,—he “came to Jordan” and being baptized of John “IN Jordan”—“he went up straightway out of the water.” Matt. iii. 16; Mark i. 9.

4. The *figurative Use* of the word by our Lord implies the same sense. Referring to his own infinite suffering, he says, “I have a baptism to be baptized with;” which event in prophetic language is thus expressed, “I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.” Ps. lxi. 2; Luke xii. 50. Could our Divine Lord be thinking of a *sprinkling* at this time?

5. The *several Allusions* of the Apostles confirm the sense we have given. Christians in baptism are said to be conformed to Christ in a *Burial*, a *Resurrection*, a *Planting*, and *Rising*, Rom. vi. 3-5. Col. ii. 12; all of which bear a reference to the mode of *immersion*.

If I might go beyond the writings of the New Testament into the evidences of the practice which are found in the first Christian Writers, beginning with Barnabas and proceeding to Chrysostom, “innumerable testimonies” (as Vossius expresses it) are at hand to show that *immersion* was their only established practice.* The commencement of *perfusion*, whether by pouring or sprinkling, (the latter of which is often called *rhantism*, from a Greek

* Extracts from the writings of the early Fathers above referred to, may be found in “The Scripture Guide to Baptism, by R. Pengilly,” in which the Christian writers of the *first four Centuries* do as plainly describe the usual practice of *immersion*, as words can convey that sense. That work contains, in a compressed form, an extensive examination both of the Scriptural *Subjects* and *Mode* of baptism, and being in very extensive circulation, and of small expense, the reader is referred to it, to prevent enlargement in these Letters. [It is issued by the American Baptist Publication Society, No. 118 Arch St., Philadelphia.]

word signifying *sprinkling*) cannot be found, according to Dr. Wall, earlier than in the case of Novatian, who in the middle of the Third Century, being ill and fearing to die in an unbaptized state, "was poured (*perichuthenta*) all over in bed." Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* L. vi. c. 43.

This innovation, (when it was found that "all the clergy and many of the laity" disapproved of Novatian's subsequent entrance into the ministry because of his defective baptism,) was submitted to Cyprian, bishop of Carthage. Cyprian replied that the baptism in such a case might be allowed to pass, "*necessitate cogente, et Deo indulgentiam suam largiente,*" which Bp. Taylor renders, "in case of necessity, God pardoning and necessity compelling." *Ductor Dubit.* p. 644. Folio.

From this period, and with this authority, the application of water by *pouring* was allowed in case of sickness, which was hence called 'Clinic baptism;' but never allowed as a general practice *in health* for more than 1000 years after Christ; and not in England till the middle of the Sixteenth Century; about that period, "sprinkling, (says Dr. Wall) within the time of a half a century, from A. D. 1550 to 1600, prevailed to be the more general." *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* Pt. II. ch. ix. § 2.

If my readers think that men have power and authority to alter what God ordains, then they may think little of this change; but to such a sentiment I cannot subscribe. I now adduce the testimony of Friends:—

1. Respecting the meaning of the terms *Baptize* and *Baptism*.

ROBERT BARCLAY. "*Baptizo* signifies *immergo*; that is, to plunge and dip in—whereas our adversaries, for the most part, only *sprinkle* a little water upon the forehead, which doth not at all answer to the word *baptism*."

—So that if our adversaries will stick to the word, they must alter their method of sprinkling.”—*Apology*, Proposition xii. § 10.

JOHN GRATTON. “John did baptize into water; and it was a baptism, a real dipping, or plunging into water.”—*Life of John Gratton*, p. 231.

WILLIAM DELL. Speaking of baptism, he calls it, “The *plunging* of a man in cold water.”—*Select Works*, p. 389. Edit. 1773.

THOMAS ELLWOOD. “They [the Apostles at the feast of Pentecost] were now baptized with the Holy Ghost indeed; and that in the strict and proper sense of the word *baptize*; which signifies *to dip, plunge or put under*.”—*Sac. Hist. of the N. Test.* Pt. II. p. 307.

SAMUEL FOTHERGILL. “By which [baptism of the Holy Spirit,] I understand such a thorough *immersion* into his holy nature, as to know him, the only begotten Son of God, to conform the soul to his own image.”—*Remarks on Address to People called Quakers*, p. 27.

JOSEPH PHIPPS. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is “effected by spiritual immersion.—The practice of *sprinkling* infants, under the name of *baptism*, hath neither precept nor precedent in the New Testament.”—*Dissertations on Bap. and Communion*, pp. 25, 30.

WILLIAM PENN. “I cannot see why the Bishop [of Cork, in answer to whom he wrote] should assume the power of unchristianizing us, for not practising of that which he himself practices so *unscripturally*, and that according to the sentiments of a considerable part of Christendom; having not one text of Scripture to prove that *sprinkling in the face* was the water baptism.”—*Defence of Gospel Truths*, pp. 82, 83.

GEORGE WHITEHEAD. “Sprinkling, I deny to be baptism, either in a proper or scripture sense. For sprinkling is *rhantism*, and not *baptism*.... *to baptize*, is to *plunge* under water, to *overwhelm*. Wherefore I

would not have these men offended at the word *rhantism*, it being as much English as the word baptism."—*Truth Prevalent*, Chap. ix. p. 116.

ELIZ. BATHURST. "*Sprinkling* infants, this they [the Friends] utterly deny, as a thing by men imposed, and never by God or Christ instituted."—See p. 53.

THOMAS LAWSON. "'Tis very evident, if *sprinkling* had been of Divine institution, the Greeks had their *rhantismos*; but as *dipping* was the institution, they used *baptismos*; so maintaining the purity and propriety of the language.—To sprinkle young or old, and call it baptism, is very incongruous; for baptism signifies *dipping*. However *rhantism* hath entered into, and among, the professors of Christianity; and, to GAIN THE MORE ACCEPTANCE, 'tis called *Baptism*."—*Baptismalogia*, pp. 117, 118, 119.

ANTHONY PURVER. "*Baptized* is but a Greek word used in English, and signifying plunged."—*Note*, on 1 Cor. xv. 29.

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY. "That the participle '*baptizing*,' as it is used in this passage (Mat. xxviii. 18-20,) is capable, on common philological principles, of being interpreted in its literal sense, as relating to an outward *immersion*, it would at once be uncandid and useless to deny."—*Observations*, p. 96.

2. On the Practice of John and the Apostles, the Friends are equally clear and decisive.

ROBERT BARCLAY, having spoken of *plunging* in baptism, adds, "That was the proper use of water baptism among the Jews, and also by John and the primitive Christians."—As before.

THOMAS LAWSON. "Such as *rhantize* or sprinkle infants, have no command from Christ, nor example among the Apostles, nor the first Christians for so doing.—The ceremony of John's ministration was dipping their bodies in water." He cites numerous authorities, and then adds, "See the author of *rhant-*

tism, that is *sprinkling*; not Christ, nor the Apostles, but Cyprian; not in the days of Christ, but some 250 years after.”—*Baptismalogia*, p. 117.

WILLIAM PENN. “..... In the first times....it was ‘in the river of Jordan,’ now in a basin!”—*Defence*, as before, p. 83.

JOS. JOHN GURNEY. “Although the baptism practised by John and by the Apostles, did not in all its circumstances resemble those Jewish washings—yet it was precisely similar to them in that main particular of *immersion* in water.....The baptism of the Proselytes was a complete *immersion* and was appointed to take place in a *confluence of waters*; the baptism of John and the Christians is generally allowed to be of the same character....That many of the Apostles were accustomed, both before and after the ascension of Jesus, to baptize their converts *in water* is indeed rendered indisputable by certain passages in the Gospel of John and the Book of Acts. Neither are we to imagine that in this respect the Apostles acted in opposition to the will of their Divine Master, who appears to have imposed upon them no sudden change of conduct respecting ritual observances—”—*Observations*, pp. 68, 71, 100, 101.

And if the dear Redeemer *imposed no change* respecting ritual observances, who, after his ascent to heaven, will come forward and impose the change! Who will dare to alter what Christ would not alter—what he sanctioned by his Divine authority, and in the observance of which he promised his presence “to the end of the world!” Matt. xxviii. last verse.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

I must now take my leave of my readers, by affectionately entreating them to contemplate this subject with an unbiassed mind, and in that "simplicity and godly sincerity," which every thing that appertains to the will of Christ, demands from his followers. The maxims of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, "Prove all things—hold fast that which is good," are infinitely important, and universally binding.

On the *first* part of the subject on which I have been treating, *the perpetual obligation of this ordinance*, I conceive the chief objection of Friends is founded upon the spirituality of the gospel dispensation. God is worshipped, they say, not in outward forms, but "in spirit and in truth." We know He cannot be worshipped in any other way; but may not *means* be employed to assist the heart and the mind in this spiritual worship? The writer, being unknown, may be permitted to allude to his own case. If ever he felt Divine emotion, and his soul engaged in spiritual worship, it has been, not so much in silent meetings, where he has sometimes sought the Divine blessing, as when his senses, by means of the baptismal rite, and the memorials of the body and blood of Jesus, have *aided the soul* to involve itself, so to speak, in the glorious realities of the Redeemer's work.

If baptism does not spiritually profit the receiver, it is not the fault of the ordinance. The writer, at the age of eighteen, was baptized before thousands

of spectators. Many long years have since passed away, but when *in thought* he can go back and stand beside that river—think of the “many witnesses” that stood on the banks, and parents and brethren amongst the rest, beholding the voluntary dedication of a youth to the THREE-ONE GOD—he feels *impelled* by the thought to endeavor to *move on in the heavenward road*, THERE and THEN publicly and avowedly commenced. He never can visit the banks of that river, without feeling fully disposed to kneel down, as Paul did on the sea-shore, and implore aid from on high to help him *to finish* the Christian life worthy the beginning of it. So may it be! Let us not, dear Brethren, blame the ordinances, but ourselves, if we profit not by them.

The frequent allusions of the Apostles to the spiritual gifts or benefits, associated with baptism, do not prove that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was intended by them: as where they say, “Buried with Christ—risen with Christ—baptized into Christ—one baptism—not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience,” &c. &c. In these cases, we are to remember *God joins the means and the end*, as he does in the Scriptures, in cases innumerable. Thus, “The gospel is the power of God”—“The word is Spirit;” and so “baptism saves,” 1 Pet. iii. 21;—it is not the gospel, nor the word, nor baptism, but God’s Spirit working by them and through them. in all *true believers*. And why should we be so anxious to put asunder “what God hath joined together?”

Respecting the *Subjects* of water-baptism, if the Scriptures are to decide the question, or if the nature of the Christian religion, or the character of the Church of Christ, then the Subjects must be *Believers*, and Believers only.

Of the *Mode*, I only add, that as the pattern of Christ, and the practice of his first followers, are quite evident, so the *scriptural* observance of this sacred rite cannot be in any other form; and that form, great and learned men of all denominations have candidly acknowledged to be *immersion*. If this form be more *inconvenient*, and a *heavier cross*, so much the greater is the honor of following the Redeemer in it, and the service itself HE will know how to appreciate ANOTHER DAY. For HIS sake,

I am, my dear Friends,

Ever affectionately yours,

R. PENGILLY.

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